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SIR ANDREW WYLIE,

OF THAT ILK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ANNALS OF THE PARISH," &c.

John Galt

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH;

AND T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.

1822.

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SIR ANDREW WYLIE.

CHAPTER I.

THE COTTAGE.

SIR ANDREW WYLIE, like the generality of great geniuses, was born and bred in very humble circumstances. By the early death of both his parents, he was consigned in infancy to the care of his maternal grandmother, Martha Docken, one of those clashan carlins who keep alive, among the Scottish peasantry, the traditions and sentiments which constitute so much of the national character.

This old woman resided in the hamlet of Stoneyholm, in the shire of Ayr. Her sole breadwinner was her spinning-wheel, and yet she was

cheerfully contented with her lot ; for it had pleased Heaven to bless her with a blithe spirit, and a religious trust in the goodness of Providence.

The furniture of her cottage, in addition to Andrew's cradle, and that was borrowed, consisted of one venerable elbow-chair, with a tall perpendicular back curiously carved, a family relic of better days, enjoyed by her own or her husband's ancestors ; two buffet-stools, one a little larger than the other ; a small oaken claw-foot table ; her wheel, a hand-reel, a kail-pot, and a skillet, together with a scanty providing of bedding, and a chest that was at once coffer, wardrobe, and amrie.

Behind the house she had a patch of some five or six falls of ground for a garden, which she delved and planted herself, and the rent she paid for the whole was ten shillings per annum. The gathering of this sum, after she received the heavy handful of Andrew, a weak and ailing baby, required no little care. But instead of repining at the burden, she often declared to the neighbours that he was " great company, and though at times a wee fashous, he is an auld farent bairn, and

kent a raisin frae a black clok before he had a tooth ; putting the taen in his mouth wi' a smirk, but skrieghing like desperation at the sight o' the ithers."

During the summer of the first year after Andrew had been brought home to her, she was generally seen sitting with her wheel, basking in the sun, at the gable of her cottage, with her grandson at her side in her biggest stool, turned upside down, amusing himself with the cat.

Andrew was a small and delicate child, but he grew apace, and every day, in the opinion of his grandmother, improved in his looks. " His een," as she said to her kimmers while she dandled him at the door as they stopped to speak to her in passing, " are like gowans in a May morning, and his laugh's as blithe as the lilt o' the linty."

Philosophers in these expressions may discover the fond anticipations of hopeful affection, looking forward to a prosperous fortune for the child ; but Andrew, for a long time, shewed no indications of possessing any thing in common with the talents that are usually supposed requisite to ensure distinction or riches. In his boyhood, how-

ever, Martha frequently observed "that he was a pawkie laddie, and if he wasna a deacon at book lair, he kent as weel as the maister himsel how mony blue beans it taks to mak five."

The "maister" here spoken of was Dominie Tannyhill, one of those meek and modest novices of the Scottish priesthood, who, never happening to meet with any such stroke of good fortune as the lot of a tutor in a laird's family, wear out the even tenor of their blameless days in the little troubles of a village-school.

At the time when Andrew was placed under his care, the master seemed to be about forty, but he was probably two or three years younger. He was pale and thin, and under the middle size, and stooped a little, as if his head had been set on somewhat awry. It proceeded, however, from a habit which he had acquired in consequence of being short-sighted, and accustomed to write and read with his ear almost touching the paper. At times he would erect himself even into something like an air of dignity, and change his lowly and diffident tone into the voice and accent of an earnest and impassioned eloquence.

Every thing in his appearance indicated a moderate spirit, in perfect accordance with the mildness of his manners, and his few and humble acquirements ; but there was an apostolic energy in his thoughts, when his own feelings were roused, or when he addressed himself to move those of others, with which Nature at times shewed how willing she was, if fortune had so pleased, to make him a pathetic and impressive preacher. Whether he ever felt the longings of ambition, or rather whether he ever repined at the unheeded and unknown estate in which he was left to pass away, like a sequestered spring, whose pure and gentle course is only seen in the meadows by a little narrow edging of richer verdure, could never be discovered in the still sobriety of his placid temper ; but if all other passions were hushed in his quiet bosom, the kindly disposition which he shewed towards every living thing begat in the minds of his pupils an affectionate respect, of far greater power in the little state and commonwealth of his school, than would have been yielded to the authority of more arrogant abilities, backed by the taws, that dreaded satrap of Scottish didactic discipline.

In his dress, the master was as remarkable as in his mind and manners. His linen was always uncommonly neat, and his coat and vest of raven grey, though long thread-bare, never shewed a broken thread, nor the smallest stationary speck of dust. His breeches, of olive thickset, were no less carefully preserved from stains; and his dark blue worsted gamashins, reaching above the knees in winter, not only added to the comfort of his legs, but protected his stockings. Between his cottage and the church, or in the still evenings when he was seen walking solitary along the untrodden parts of the neighbouring moor, he wore a small cocked-hat, and as his eyes were weak and tender, in bright weather he commonly slackened the loops, and, turning the point round, converted the upright gable of the back into a shade.

If the master, like other potentates, had a favourite, it was certainly our hero, at whose droll and whimsical remarks he was sometimes observed almost to smile. For Andrew was not long at school, till he shewed that he was, at least with respect to his sayings, destined to attract notice. Indeed the very first day, when his grandmother

herself led him to the door with his A B board in his hand, he got a name that he never lost. After the dismissal of the school, as he was playing with the other boys on the high road, a carriage and four horses, with outriders, happened to pass, whirling along with the speed and pride of nobility. The schoolboys, exhilarated by the splendour of a phenomenon, rare in those days in Stoneyholm, shouted with gladness as it passed, and our hero animated the shout into laughter by calling out, "Weel dune, wee wheelie, the muckle ane canna catch you." From that time he was called "Wheelie;" but instead of being offended by it, as boys commonly are by their nicknames, he bore it with the greatest good-humour; and afterwards, when he had learnt to write, marked his books and copies with "Andrew Wheelie, his book." Even the master in time used to call him Wheelie, and insensibly fostered his taste for the odd and droll, by sometimes inviting him on a Saturday afternoon to partake of his pale and economical tea.

Andrew, who was naturally shrewd and observant, perceiving that the master was diverted by

his humour, exerted himself on these occasions, by which exercise he gradually acquired a degree of readiness and self-possession in conversation, unusual among Scottish boys, and a happy vernacular phraseology, which he retained through life, and which, with those who had a true relish of character, was enjoyed as something as rare and original as the more elegant endowment of genius.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAGPIE.

ANDREW was not distinguished among his school-fellows by any particular predilection for those amusements in which the boys of a country school are so adventurous ; yet he was always a desired member of their nesting parties in the spring, and nutting excursions in the autumn ; for his drollery and good humour knit their hearts to him ; and if he seldom strung an egg of his own herrying, and absolutely, at all times, refused to risk his neck on the boughs of the hazel, he still brought home his full share of the holiday plunder.

On an occasion when a pyet's nest was scaled,

only a single young one was found ; and it was so strong and cunning, that it almost escaped from the grasp of Willy Cunningham, the boy who was sent up the tree. Some debate ensued on the division of the day's spoil, as to who should get the magpie. Andrew thought it ought to be given to Willy ; but Cunningham, a frank and generous fellow, insisted that it should be Wheeclie's, assigning as a reason, that Maggy, as Andrew had called it on the spot, " was an auld farent thing like himsel, and would learn mair wi' him than wi' ony other laddie at the school." Cunningham's proposal was ratified with a unanimous shout ; and certainly no bird was ever more appropriately disposed of, for Andrew not only taught it to fetch and carry, and to filch with surprising address, but to speak several words with the most diverting distinctness.—Maggy herself seemed to be right well pleased with her master ; and, according to tradition, knew every word he said, with the discernment of a spirit.

When his companions, in the winter evenings, assembled round his grandmother's hearth, Maggy on those occasions placed herself between his legs ;

and as often as he said any thing that tickled their young fancies, turned up her cunning eye, and then jocundly chattered with her bill, as if she participated in their laughter.

The natural knavery of the magpie being cultivated by education, she sometimes took it into her head to pilfer a little on her own account, and among others who suffered by her depredations, was the master. Between the school hours he always opened the windows to ventilate the room ; and Maggy, as often as she could, availed herself of the opportunity to steal the boys' pens. It happened, however, that she went once too often, and was caught in the fact, with a new pen in her neb.

The master's own kindly humour induced him to pardon the bird ; but as quarrels had arisen among the boys, occasioned by the loss of their pens, one accusing the other of the theft, he deemed it incumbent on him to rebuke the owner of the depredator. Accordingly, when the school assembled in the afternoon, he proclaimed silence ; and taking up Maggy from under a basket where he had imprisoned her, he addressed the boys to the following effect :—

“ Wha’ amang you is guilty of keeping this misleart and unprincipled pyet, which is in the practice, whenever I leave the windows open to air the school, of coming in and stealing the pens from off the desks—carrying them awa’ in its neb, without ony regard for the consequence ?”

“ It’s mine,” cried Andrew.

“ Yours !” said the master ; “ then, Wheelie, come ye here, for I maun point out to you the great error of such conduct. It is, as ye maun surely hae often heard, an auld and a true saying, that ‘ They wha begin wi’ stealing needles and prins, may end wi’ horned knout.’ I’m no saying, so ye needna nigher, that ever this pyet will steal either horse or black cattle ; but I would exhort you, nevertheless, to put it away, for it is a wicked bird, and may, by its pranks, entice you to do evil yoursel. I dinna, however, recommend that ye should put the poor creature to death—that would be a cruelty ; and, besides, ye ken it’s but a feathered fowl, and no endowed wi’ ony natural understanding of good and evil. It kens nae better, like the other beasts that perish, than to mak it’s living in a dishonest manner. Therefore, I

counsel you just to take it to the woods, and set it at liberty, where it may fall out in some other's hand."

To this Andrew replied, with one of his pawkie glances, "It's but the first fault o' poor Maggy, master, and ye shouldna be overly severe, for she doesna ken, as ye say, that theeving's a sin; so I hope ye'll allow me to gie her an opportunity to tak up the steik in her stocking, and I'll admonish her weel when I get her hame—O ye sinfu' bird, are ye no ashamed of yoursel, to bring such disgrace on me?"

Maggy instantly testified her contrition and her thankfulness for the advocacy of her master, by hopping from the relaxed grasp of the good natured dominie, and nestling in his bosom.

"It's really a droll beast, I maun alloo that," and I'll forgie you for this ae time," said the master; "but I would advise you to tie a string to its leg, and keep it in the house, for there's no telling what it may commit."

Andrew having thus obtained pardon for the magpie, she became a greater favourite than ever with the boys, and produced precisely the effects

which the master had feared. Nothing portable at open window was safe from her thievish bill, especially the thread papers of Miss Mizy Cunningham, the maiden aunt of the boy by whose good nature our hero became master of the bird.

Miss Mizy lived in the mansion-house of Craiglands, close to the village, and had under her dominion Willy and his sister Mary; for their mother was dead, and the laird, their father, troubled himself very little with any earthly thing. He was, as Andrew described him, “a carle that daunered about the doors wi’ his hands in his pouches, and took them out at meal-time.”—As for Miss Mizy herself, she was a perfect paragon of gentility and precision. However slovenly the grounds about the house were kept, the interior of the mansion was always in the trimmest order; and nothing could exceed the nun-like purity of the worthy lady’s own cambric-clad person.

It happened, by the death of a relation, that it was necessary the family should be put into mourning; and Miss Mizy, for this purpose, had bought herself a suit of sable, as well as a due portion of crape, and the other requisites of funereal sorrow.

She was sitting, busy with her needle, making up the dress, at the parlour window, which was open, when Andrew, one afternoon, with his pyet, came to ask Willy to go out with him. Maggy had so often teased Miss Mizy by pilfering her thread papers, that justice and vengeance were sworn against her. This the boys were well aware of, but could not resist the temptation of “setting up the birses of aunty.”—Maggy, accordingly was set loose. In a moment she was in at the window, and had seized a thread case. Miss Mizy, however, before the pyet could escape, darted at her like a cat on a mouse; and almost in the same instant, poor Maggy, with its neck twisted, was flung out with such fury at Andrew, that it almost knocked him down.

This was a dreadful outrage on the part of Miss Mizy; and the whole school participated in the revenge which was vowed against the murderer of Maggy; nor was ever revenge more complete.—Next day, the principal companions of Andrew provided themselves with a large tub, which they filled with water from the Laird’s stable-yard; and Andrew, going up to the window where Miss Mizy

was again sitting at her seam, while the other conspirators were secretly bringing the tub under the window, cried, “Ye auld rudons, what gart you kill my pyet?—odd I’ll mak you rue that. Nae wonder ye ne’er got a man, ye cankerly runt, wi’ your red neb and your tinkler tongue.”

This was enough. Miss Mizy rose like a tempest; the same moment souce came the unsavoury deluge from the tub, full in her face, to the total wreck and destruction of all the unfinished bravery of mournings which lay scattered around.

CHAPTER III.

THE TASK.

“THE awfu’-like thing,” as Miss Mizy ever afterwards spoke of the schoolboys’ conspiracy, was attended with the most important consequences. The first result was a formal complaint to Mr Tannyhill, to whom the indignant plaintiff stated her wrongs with an eloquence to which we cannot do justice, demanding the immediate punishment of the offenders.

The master’s affectionate bosom was deeply afflicted with the account that Miss Mizy gave of “the devilry,” which, in her narrative, certainly suffered no diminution either in the sins of the perpetration, or the cunning with which it had been planned. In his way back to the school, he meditated on the sort of punishment which he ought to inflict, for hitherto the rod had been unknown in his discipline; and he came to the strange conclusion, that, as the end of all punish-

ment ought to be the reformation of the delinquent, he would oblige the culprits in this case to apply with more than ordinary assiduity to their tasks, and require them, for the remainder of the summer, to attend the school two additional hours a-day. Some governors might have thought this a punishment to themselves, but it never occurred to his honest and ingenuous bosom, that it was any hardship; on the contrary, he felt it a duty which he was called to perform, in order to correct the effects of the evil spirit which had been so audaciously manifested. Accordingly, when the boys assembled next day, he called the conspirators before him, and made them mount a form in presence of their companions.

“ I told you,” said he, casting his eyes towards our hero, “ that the ill deedy pyet would bring you into baith scaith and scorn; and now ye see my prophecy has come to pass, for there ye stand, five a’ in a row, like so many evil-doers as ye surely are, that I ought to make an example of, by letting you fin the weight o’ my hand. But it’s no my way to chastise with stripes on the body; no, unless the heart is made to feel, a bite o’ the taws in the loof, or on the back, will soon heal.

In truth, my bairns, I'm wae for you, for gin ye gang on at this rate what's to become of you, when ye enter the world to mak your bread? wha, Wheelie, will hae ony regard for you, if ye gie yoursel up to mischief?—Others here hae friens that may guide them, but ye hae only your auld feckless grannie, that wi' mickle hard labour has ettled, with a blessed constancy, to breed you up in the fear o' God. O man, it will be a sore return for a' her love and kindness, if ye break her heart at last—I speak to you mair than to the rest, because in this matter ye are the most to blame, and stand in the greatest peril.”

“Weel, weel,” cried our hero, half sobbing, half angrily, “ye need nae fash me ony mair about it, but tell me at ance what ye're ga'n to do wi' me.”

The master was so astonished at this interruption, that he stepped back, and sat down in his chair for some time silent. The culprits became all pale, and the rest of the boys stood aghast; so daring a defiance, as it seemed to them, of all authority, could not, it was supposed, but be followed by some tremendous display of power.

Mr Tannyhill, however, read Wylie's character in the expression, and by some happy or benevolent interpretation of his petulance, took the only way with him that could be attended with any benefit.—“ I will fash you nae mair,” said he, addressing him emphatically, “ as ye seem to be contrite for your fault ; but, in order to try whether ye have the right leaven o' repentance in you, I will task you to a task that will do you good for a' the remainder of your days.”

He then ordered him to get the first fifty Psalms by heart, and interdicted him from all play and pastime till he had learnt them.

From that moment Andrew applied himself to learn the Psalms, with a perseverance that quite surprised the master, who had hitherto regarded him but as a droll and curious creature. The shortness of the time in which he performed the task was not, however, remarkable ; for his memory was not well adapted to literature, but his singular abstraction from all his play-fellows, and the earnestness with which he adhered determinately to his task, astonished every one. During the intervals of the school hours, he was seen sit-

ting by himself in the lee of a headstone in the church-yard, muttering verse after verse from the Psalm-book which he held in his hand.

In this situation Mary Cunningham, the sister of Willy, happened to pass, and seeing him, said, "What are ye doing there, Wheelie?"

He looked up, but, without answering her question, repeated in a loud monotonous voice,—

" My heart inditing is
Good matter in a song."

"O, hae ye no got your Psalms yet!" exclaimed Mary, for she had heard from her brother of his particular additional punishment; and going up close to him, inquired how many he had learnt.

"I can say ane-and-forty a' through, Miss Mary, without missing a word."

"What a lee, Wheelie, that is," said Mary, "naebody could ever say so many Psalms straight through."

"Will ye hearken me?" said Andrew; and she took the book, which he at the same time offered, and leaning over the headstone behind him, bade him begin.

“ That man hath perfect blessedness
Who walketh not astray,”

he immediately repeated in one unvaried stream of voice,

“ But dwelleth in the scorner’s chair,
And stands in sinner’s way.”

“ O, Wheelie, Wheelie, ye canna say the first verse o’ the vera first Psalm ; a pretty like story, that ye hae gotten ane-and-forty by heart !” exclaimed Mary.

Reference was, in consequence, made to the book ; and after some farther parley, Andrew resumed, and went on as far as the twelfth Psalm, without missing a single word, to the delighted surprise of his fair auditor. By this time, however, it was necessary that he should go to school, and Mary return home ; but, before parting, she agreed to visit him again at the same place next day to hear the remainder, and she kept her word.

Again the book was in her hand, and leaning over the tombstone, with Andrew sitting below, she listened with unwearied pleasure to the undeviating and inflexible continuance of his monotonous strain, till he had reached the thirty-first

Psalm, when the same causes that occasioned the former interruption again obliged them to separate, after a renewal of the compact.

On the third day, Andrew completed not only the forty-one, but two more that he had learnt in the meantime. Mary confessed her admiration of his wonderful genius, and from thenceforth, till he had completed his task, she was his regular visitor.

Out of this circumstance a greater degree of intimacy arose between them, than is usual among boys and girls of their age. She admired him as a prodigy of talent, and he was pleased when he met her, on account of the interest she had taken in his task. From the attack on her aunt, however, he had been prohibited from approaching "The Place," as the Craigland mansion-house was called by the villagers; and as she was educated by Miss Mizy herself, preparatory to being in due time sent to an Edinburgh boarding-school, they had few opportunities of meeting. But on Sunday he always took care to stand in the path by which the Laird's family crossed the church-yard, and a smile was as regularly exchanged between

them in passing. As often also as the minister read out to be sung any one of the fifty Psalms, Mary would peep over the front of the Laird's laft, to where Andrew sat beside his grandmother in the area below; and on these occasions she never missed his eye, which seemed to be instinctively turned up in expectation of meeting her's.

In this way, the germ of a mutual affection was implanted. before either was awakened by Nature to the sense of love and beauty, or informed by the world of the disparity of their condition. They were themselves unconscious of the tie with which simplicity had innocently linked them together—and being as yet both free from the impulses of passion, they felt not the impediments which birth and fortune had placed between them.

The Craigland family was one of the most ancient in the county; the estate was large, but by the indolence of the Laird, it was much neglected, and the rental was in consequence small. The woods, however, were valuable, and the old tacks, or leases, were drawing to a close; so that, while in a state of comparative penury, it seemed probable that both Cunningham and his sister would

inherit a very ample patrimony. Of this their aunt Miss Mizy was fully sensible, and frequently complained to her brother, that he should allow his son, with such an inheritance in view, to be brought up among the children of the tenants. But her complaints were long unavailing; the Laird had been educated in the same school with the fathers of these children, and he could discover nothing in his sister's remonstrances to make him wish to see his son a finer gentleman than himself. "The awfu'-like thing," however, had a more impressive effect than her lectures. It was an exploit of mischief, far surpassing all the easy pranks of his soft youth; and upon the minister, at Miss Mizy's instigation, representing to him the disgrace and dishonour that would ensue to the family, if the heir was long permitted to associate with such unmeet playmates, as the boys of Mr Tannyhill's school, he consented that Willy should be sent from home, and placed at an academy suitable to his rank and prospects. This was accordingly done, and like other boys that drop away from among their school-fellows, Cunningham was soon forgotten.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAIR.

AFTER Cunningham was removed from Mr Tannyhill's school, a considerable change took place among our hero's playmates. The fraternity to which the two boys belonged, was, in fact, in the course of that summer, broken up; and, for some time, Andrew was without any particular companion. These temporary intermissions of friendship are, however, common to men as well as boys; but the cares of our riper years make us less sensible of the blank left by the removal of a neighbour, than the loss we suffered when a school-fellow was taken away.

The nickname of Wheelie, in consequence of this change, was gradually forgotten, or rather ceased to be any longer in use; while the strippling himself seemed daily in quest of something that he could not find, either on the moorlands, or

along the hedge-rows and the belts of planting that skirted the hills and farms of the Craiglands. He was, as his grandmother said, for some time “like a tynt creature ;” and for lack of other company, often, on the road-side, fell into discourse with travelling tinklers, blue-gowns, or old soldiers, who had acquired a sufficient stock of wounds and scars to set them up in beggary. Poor Andrew, however, had nothing to give them ; but, nevertheless, it was remarked that they always left him seemingly better pleased than they ever quitted the Laird’s yett, even when Miss Mizy, after the term day, allowed an extra neaveful to their wonted weekly almous.

In the evenings, Andrew had recourse to the firesides of the gash and knacky carles and carlins of the village. Still, even in their queerest stories, he found a deficiency, for he had no friend of his own age to share his remarks afterwards.

About Hallowe’en, however, this want was supplied. At the distance of a mile from Stoneyholm lay the small estate of Woodside, a mailing, as it was called, with a house somewhat better than the common farm-steadings. The proprietor happened

to die, and the lands were rented by his heirs to a neighbouring farmer; the house and garden being in consequence to let, were taken by a Mrs Pierston, the widow of a Glasgow merchant, who, at the Martinmas term, took possession.

This matron had but one child, a fine smart rattling boy of the name of Charles; who was sent to the master's school, where he and Andrew soon became inseparable. The distance of his mother's house from the village, occasioned him, as is usual in such circumstances, to bring his dinner in his pocket at first; he was afterwards allowed to dine with Andrew—an arrangement of some advantage to old Martha; for Mrs Pierston was in good circumstances, and indulgent to her only son. Thus commenced one of those attachments which are formed but at school, and are generally supposed to weather the changes of fortune, and the blasts of adversity, better than the friendships of more considerate years.

The buoyancy of Pierston's spirits gave him a seeming ascendancy over Wylie; but it was soon observed by the neighbours, that, in reality, Andrew was the master, and that by submitting to

the pranks and whims of Charles in small affairs, he uniformly obtained the management of things of greater moment, if such language may be applied to the disinterested concerns of school-boys. Pierston had also, as it might have been supposed from its early effects, another advantage over his rustic companion. He had spent his boyhood in Glasgow, and had been several years at the Grammar-school of that city, before his mother removed to the Woodside house. He was in consequence pretty well, for his time, accomplished in many tricks. He stood much less in awe of the municipal dignitaries of the neighbouring towns; and, accordingly, at the different fairs, to which he constantly induced Andrew to accompany him, he not only kept his part better among the town boys, but even went farther than most of them in the frolics customary on such occasions. But although it was said of Charles that he was a perfect devil's limb, he had a generous warmth of heart, and a lively good humour, that bespoke a favourable interpretation to his worst and wildest stratagems.— Many an old apple-woman at the fairs, however, on seeing the gouk and the tittling approach, (as the two boys were called,) watched their tempting

piles of toys and delectables with gleg een, and staff grasped to repel some pawkie aggression ; while, at the same time, the boys were always merrily welcomed ; for Charles had plenty of pocket money, and spent it freely.

If, in those excursions to the fairs, Pierston found fun and frolic, Andrew reaped some experience of the world. He soon saw that the money his companion spent was sufficient to set up any old woman with a stand ; and the thought occurred to him, that if he could get Charles, on the next Fair day, to give his money to Janet Pirn, a sly and droll old lame widow, with whose tales and ballads they had been often entertained during the winter, they might be able to pay Janet a shilling for her trouble, and make a great deal of money by the speculation. The idea was most delightful ; but Charles justly dreaded that if the existence of the copartnery should become known to the other boys, especially to those belonging to the towns, the consequences would be ruinous, as Janet would assuredly be plundered without mercy. This consideration, however, was soon got over, by Andrew saying, that if they kept their own secret, it could never be known.

Terms were accordingly proposed to Janet, who readily acceded to them; and when the Kilwinning Fair day came round, she made her appearance at the corner of the bridge, seated in an arm chair, dressed in her red cloak and black Sunday bonnet, with a table before her, covered with a cloth secretly borrowed by Charles from his mother's napery chest, and temptingly adorned with a competent stock of the requisite allurements. The boys themselves had accompanied Janet into Irvine to buy them, and they also assisted her to set them out to the best advantage. The muscalmons were declared to be as big as doos' eggs—the sweeties and corrianders were of all sizes and colours—intermingled with the smallest and fairest Mistress Nanse—the rock of Gibraltar was laid forth, with all its best veins particularly turned towards the view—parliament-cakes, and ginger-bread watches, richly gilded—piles of raisins and of figs—gems of sugar-candy, and amber lumps of barley-sugar, constituted this garden of Hesperides; round which a formidable array of idolatries of all descriptions, from Ogres, with a curran in the forehead instead of an eye, to game cocks with

bits of cinnamon for spurs, were exhibited to the greatest advantage. Such another stand was not in the whole Fair. Janet had a great run, and the two boys, each with a stick in his hand, stood centinels at the ends of the table. All went on for some time in the most prosperous way; Andrew counted the gains that were flowing in, and Charles enticed customers by the bravado of his eulogium on the articles for sale. But this display of goods, and of the interest which the gouk and the tittling had in the concern, excited the envy and jealousy of their less successful competitors; and when about noon, Janet and another carlin adjourned to one of the public-houses to get a bottle of ale to their dinner of bread and cheese, the secret was divulged that she was but an agent and a hireling. We shall not attempt to describe the speed with which the story spread, nor the indignation of all the rival sweetie-wives. The juvenile customers, who had dealt with Janet merely because her sweets were the best at the Fair, thought themselves cheated, and opened an incessant fire of the small shot of pips, while a tremendous battery of twenty mouths, every now and then, roared from the adjacent stands. Andrew ad-

vised Janet to pack up her things quietly, but Charles insisted she should not budge a step; they had as good a right to sell things at the Fair as any other body, and he was prepared to defend it. —The attack continued—the crowd gathered—Charles lost his temper, and struck a great heavy lumbering country lout that was laughing at him over the fingers. The fellow retaliated. Some of the spectators took part with Charles—a battle-royal ensued; in the midst of which the table was upset, and all its treasures trodden in the mire, amidst the acclamations and the clapping of hands of all the rival dealers.

The two boys seeing their golden dream thus dissipated, retired from the scene, and left those who had been involved in their cause to fight the battle out. But they did not retire to bewail their misfortune—they were more heroic. Charles saw, and indeed felt, that he was no match for the country lad who had thrashed him, but his ire did not burn the less fiercely. On the contrary, he went with Andrew in quest of some of their school-fellows, to assist in revenging the wrong which he had himself provoked.

CHAPTER V.

COMMON SENSE.

WHEN the two boys had walked up the street, and passed through the gate of the mason's lodge into the churchyard, without meeting with any of their companions, Andrew halted and said, "Gd, Charlie, I'm thinking we had as weel bide as we are—Yon's a horned stot, in comparison to us, wha hae but banes o' grisle—and a solid chap o' his neive would be as deadly as Coomy the smith's forehammer—Od, I'm no for meddling ony mair wi' the muckle brute."

Pierston reprobated the pusillanimity of this prudent sentiment, and became more and more resolute for revenge.

“ Vera weel,” cried Wylie, “ tak your ain gait, and get your een steekit and your nose smash’d, and see what ye’ll mak o’t—a pretty pirlit ye’ll be, me leading you hame, blind and bleeding, wi’ a napkin, or an auld stocking tied round your head. Eh ! what a skreighing at the sight o’ you, Charlie, there will be !—your mother running out and in, clapping her hands for her murder’t bairn.”

“ I dinna care though he were to kill me,” exclaimed Charles ; “ if I had but my will o’ him before hand.”

“ Ay, that’s sense,” said Andrew, “ gin ye could but get your will o’ him first—But the fear is, that he may get the will o’ us—and what’s to be done then ?”

Pierston was a little puzzled with this, and hesitating, said, after a moment’s reflection,—
“ We might watch for him, and stane him frae behind the dike, when he’s gaun hame in the gloaming.”

“ It’s a cowardly thing to way-lay a defenceless man—Od, Charlie, I thought ye had mair spunk,” replied Andrew, in perfect sincerity, but still only

anxious to pacify the resentment of his friend. 'Touch my honour touch my life, was a sentiment that Pierston had learnt among the youths of his own kidney at the grammar-school of Glasgow; and the implied unworthiness of taking his enemy unprepared, affected him in his most vulnerable feelings.

“What am I to do, Andrew? It's a dreedfu' thing to gie up my satisfaction.—Look at my lug whar the brute struck me—it's birzed black and blue—deevil's in him, but I'll gar him rue 't.”

Andrew examined the wounded part, and declared it was just a flea bite. “It's a wee red,” said he, “and before half an hour's bye ye'll ne'er fin't. Man, Charlie, it's bairnly to make sic a wark for a bit tig on the haffet—a' ye gottin's no the tae half o' what ye gied—for ye're a deevil at a paik, when your birsies are up—I would na come in your reverence then for something.”

Pierston was flattered by the compliment to his strength and valour; his pride was also touched at the idea of exaggerating the effects of the blow he had received, which Andrew, in fact, adroitly undervalued, and he said, “As for the thump on

the side o' the head, I hae thole't twenty times mair before noo ; and I think I would be content if I was sure he had gotten as muckle frae me."

"Ye need hae nae doubt o' that, Charlie, for he got twa for ane—ye ken, ye were the first aggressor, ye struck him first wi' the stick, and he gied you but a gentle slaik wi's paw—I dinna think he was very wud for a' that—and then ye biri'd at him.—Od ! but ye're a terrier when in a passion, Charlie—and when a's considered, I think we aught to be thankfu' that we came off wi' hale banes, and nae blood spilt."

"But the stan was coupit, and a' our merchandize lost—Wha's to mak up that?" replied Pierston, fairly at a loss for a sufficient reason to nurse his rage any longer.

"I hae had my thoughts o' that too," said our hero, "and I jealouse that it was nae a right thing o' us to be marrows in ony sic trade wi' cripple Janet. It was interloping wi' the auld sweetie wives—ye saw what a stoor raise amang them when the truth came out—there were nae ither callants at the Fair keeping stands."

“ That’s weel frae you, Andrew,” said Charles, “ for it was a’ your own doing—I did na care a bawbee for the stand, and a’ the profit.”

“ I’ll mak nae denial,” was Wylie’s discreet answer ; “ for I kéné nae better ; but I hae got insight by the upshot, and I wish the whole story were weel hidden ; for gin that lassie Mary Cunningham hears that we were keeping a stand, like twa sweetie wives at the Fair, she’ll herry my seven senses wi’ her jeering—a’ ye hae gotten will be naething to what I maun thole, so let’s keep a calm sough and close tongues.”

Charles was now fully persuaded, not only of the propriety of stifling his revenge, but also convinced that they had not been engaged in any very honourable adventure ; and said, with some degree of mortification and chagrin, “ I hope Janet has ta’en care o’ the table cloth, for sic a rippet there will be about it if it’s lost.”

Andrew perceiving that he had gained a complete victory, proposed that they should return to cripple Janet ; and they found her replacing the stand with such of the articles as she had been

able to pick up, selling the damaged great bargains to the children, who, hovering round her, deplored the wreck of such delicious commodities. The moment, however, that the gowk and the tittling were again seen on the spot, the auld wives around immediately broke out on them a second time; and such had been the effect of Andrew's representation of the unworthy nature of their co-partnery, that Charles was quite daunted by their banter, and slunk away. Our hero, however, was none dismayed; but with great address turned the scale in their favour, by telling Janet that he and Charles gave up to her all the merchandize and profit, on condition that she took good care of the table-cloth. Never was generosity better timed—the gift was a little fortune to old Janet, and she so loudly expressed her thanks and gratitude, that the other women, to whom the boys had been good customers on other occasions, joined instantly in praising them to the skies, and long before the evening, the gowk and the tittling were in as high favour as ever.

But the consequences of this adventure did not stop here. It reached the ears of Mrs Pierston,

who had, indeed, previously begun to suspect, that the school at Stoneyholm was not exactly the fittest place for a boy of her son's prospects; and Charles was soon after removed, and sent to complete his education in one of the neighbouring towns, where he continued till he was summoned to London by an uncle, a great city merchant. A second time Andrew was thus again left to himself; but the friendship between him and Charles was not entirely broken by their separation. For at the vacation and holidays, Pierston regularly visited his mother at the Woodside-House, and his intimacy with Andrew was, on those occasions, as uniformly renewed. The difference of the spheres in which they moved was, however, gradually operating a change on the characters of both. Charles, destined for the mercantile profession, and amidst genteel companions, educated in the hopes and prospects of opulence, was every year developing more and more into a spruce and tonish gallant; while Andrew, bred up in rustic poverty, and without any definite views as to his future life, settled into a little gash carlie, remarkable chiefly for a straight forward simplicity. His

drollery and good humour, however, rendered him a familiar and prodigious favourite with every body ; and although few in the parish were, perhaps, more destitute of any visible means of rising in the world, a confident belief was entertained among all who knew him, that he was destined to become a rich man—a great one none ever ventured to anticipate ; nothing indeed could be more opposite to any idea of personal grandeur, than his small, short, round-headed figure, smooth apple cheeks, and little twinkling eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSULTATION.

AT the period of which we are now treating, neither the commerce nor manufactures of Scotland had risen to that height, which has since wrought such changes, not only in the appearance of the country, but affecting the very depths and principles of the national character.

The youth having few means of advancement, and but a narrow field of enterprize at home, sought their fortunes abroad; and good schooling, as it was called, constituted the common patrimony of the Scottish adventurer. As Andrew was rendered unfit by his feeble frame for the drudgery of a farmer, his grandmother, actuated in her humble sphere by the national spirit, resolved to spare no cost on his education. But whether to breed him for a divine, a doctor, or a

lawyer, was a point not easily determined. It presented even more difficulties to her imagination, than any apprehension which she entertained of procuring the means. For with respect to the latter, her trust in the care of Providence was unbounded; and she had heard of many gospel-ministers, come of no better stock, who bravely upheld the banner of the testimony, even unto the death. She had also heard of doctors who had returned nabobs from India, that began as shop-boys to druggists; and of lawyers on the freehold-roll of the county, that had commenced their career by running errands for town-officers.

But as she could not determine for herself, she resolved to consult the master. Accordingly, one afternoon, when the school had been dismissed, she went to his house, and found him at his tea, listening, with a faint smile that played among his features, like sunshine through the hedgerow, to some little comic occurrence in the village which Andrew was describing, while sitting at his side as a companion, but not at that time a participating guest.

The small room where they were seated, was

in the back part of the school-house. Behind the door, in a recess, stood a humble bed, covered with a patched and quilted coverlet, which at night was carefully removed, being only used for show by day. Fronting the entrance, a mahogany scrutoire was placed, somewhat of an incongruous degree of splendour, compared with the general style of the apartment, and over it hung a Dutch looking-glass, in a gaudy frame of flowers and gilding, a considerable margin of the plate being adorned with birds and foliage painted on the surface. The top of the scrutoire, under the glass, was covered with a damask-towel, and occupied by several volumes neatly bound, a tall wine goblet, with a white spiral line up the stalk, filled with flowers, and a mahogany tea-chest, with an inlaid likeness of a clam-shell in front. The window was between the scrutoire, and the wall facing the bed. It consisted of four panes, and looked into a small garden, rank with appleringy, and other fragrant herbs and stately flowers. The sole of the window was occupied with a flower-plot containing a geranium, round which several books lay scattered, a shaving-box, a razor-case, and a hone. Op-

posite to the window, and near the door, stood an eight-day clock, with a black bust between the volutes on the top, bearing the well-known inscription of the cloud-capt towers, indicating that the image was meant for Shakespeare. Between the clock and the corner, Andrew and the master were sitting when his grandmother entered, and she was in consequence requested to take a seat in an angular elbow-chair, which occupied the corner opposite to them.

“ I’m come,” said Martha, “ to hae a crack wi’ you about this get. It’s time noo that he were thinking o’ doing something for himsel. He’s weel through his fifteen, and I would fain hae an inkling gin he be o’ ony capacity.”

Mr Tannyhill, foreseeing that the conversation would turn on particulars, which might be as well discussed in Andrew’s absence, suggested that it would be proper for him to retire.

“ Ay,” said his grandmother, “ tak the door on your back, and play yoursel till me and the maister hae come to an understanding.”

Our hero on this hint immediately withdrew ; but although he took the door on his back by shut-

ting it after him, he placed himself close to it in the kitchen, from which the room entered, and overheard all that passed within.

“ Poor laddie,” resumed Martha, when he had retired, “ he’s no strong ; hard wark’s no for him, and saft’s ill to get. Noo, Mr Tannyhill, what’s your conceit?—I doubt he has nae got the cast o’ grace needful to a gospel-minister. James Siney, the droggest in Kilwinning, would tak him for a word o’ my mouth, if ye thought he’s o’ a physical turn ; and John Gledd, the messenger, wha was sib to his mother, ance promised as muckle ; but I canna say I hae ony broo o’ the law, for it’s a deadly distemper amang friens ; and Andra, though baith pawkie and slee, is a warm-hearted creature, and would be o’er scrimp in the severities of justice, especially in pleas amang kith and kin.”

The master replied, that, of all the learned professions, he really thought Wheelie was best disposed by nature for the law ; “ for although,” said he, “ the crow thinks its ain bird the whitest, ye’re no, Martha, sae misled by your affection, as to imagine that Andrew’s qualified to make a

soun frae the pulpit; and noo-a-days, even if he were, a' things o' religion hae settled into a method, that gies the patronless preacher but little chance o' a kirk. Wi' your oye's ordinar looks, I fear though he were to grow as learned as Matthew Henry himsel, he would hae but a cauld coal to blaw at."

"For the bairn's looks, Mr Tannyhill, I think they're weel eneugh. There may be brawer, but a hantle are far waur," said Martha, a little tartly; "howsomever, if it's your notion that he wouldna mak a sincere divine, I would rather see him gaun about the farms wi' Thomas Steek, the tailor, clouting at saxpence a-day, than walking the dike-sides between hope and starvation, wi' a thin white face, and his forefinger atween the leaves o' some auld kittle Latin buke."

"Your description o' a luckless probationer," said the master with a sigh, "is ower true. It's a state without pleasure to the man himsel, and a sorrow to a' that see him. I would be wae to think that Andrew's blithe spirit was quenched wi' the tear of mortification; and therefore, Martha, if ye would follow my advice, a' I can say is,

let him choose between Mr Sinney and John Gledd."

"I jealouse, sir," replied Martha, "that he has but a sma' stomach for the drog trade, and I fancy he'll tak to the law."

"In that," said Mr Tannyhill, "I doubt not, wi' a portion of perseverance, he may grow a topping character. I hae seen at Edinburgh, when I was at the College, advocates proudly before the Courts, that could reckon no higher parentage. He has only to join care to industry, and, by a decent use o' the means that Providence may place in his power, I have no doubt he'll reap both riches and honour."

While Martha was thus drawing out, in the pursuit of her object, the latent and slumbering mind of the master, our hero was listening with a throbbing heart. At the mention of the ministry, a dim vision floated before him, in which the fair form of Mary Cunningham was blended with the interior of a church, and the remembrance of fifty psalms. It was, however, but the passionless association of feelings and recollections that dissolved away, and was lost in disagreeable images of

the green and yellow gallipots, sores and salves, odious stuffs and bottled reptiles, with which the name of James Sinney, the druggist, was associated. The chances, by prudence and industry, of attaining riches and honours through the legal profession, determined his choice ; and he put an end to the consultation by opening the door, and looking in, at the same time saying, " I'm for John Gledd's, grannie."

CHAPTER VII.

THE OUTFIT.

THERE are few things in the world more wonderful to philosophy than the means by which the honest poor of Scotland are enabled, from day to day, with light hearts, strong arms, and brave spirits, to face the ills of life, with what they call "sma' families"—that is, at least half a dozen children. But their general condition is comparative opulence to what was the lot of old Martha Docken, and yet she was one of a class that would have spurned the gifts of charity—of that class to whom the country still points with pride, and we hope long will, in spite of all the improvements in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce.

As soon as it was determined that Andrew should be sent to John Gledd's, the writer, to learn the law, various important considerations re-

quired to be well weighed by his grandmother. In the first place, John lived in Kilwinning, a town three miles at least from Stoneyholm ; and in the second, according to custom, it was requisite that Andrew, as a lawyer's clerk, should be a little better dressed than formerly ; although Martha assured him that the ragged coat o' the callant was ne'er a mot in the man's marriage.

In a long prospective contemplation of the era which had now arrived, Martha had carefully preserved the Sunday clothes of his father ; but in order to fit him, they required considerable alterations ; and a consultation was held with Thomas Steek, the tailor, on the subject ; the result of which was, that on a day set for the purpose, Thomas, with his laddie, clipping Jock, arrived betimes at Martha's cottage door, with all the requisite implements of their profession. The tailor himself, being a lamiter, with a drawn up leg, and using a stilt, carried the shears in his left hand ; and Jock, a little hump-backed creature, brought the goose behind him, bearing the law-board over his shoulder. By their art and contrivance, Andrew was properly equipped to take his place at

John Gledd's desk—John having, on the first application, immediately agreed to lighten Martha's hand of the boy ; for however strict in the harsh offices of caption and horning, he had the friendly spirit of the poor man among the poor ; and was ever ready, to the utmost stretch of his narrow means, to help a neighbour in need.

The day fixed for our hero to enter the world by the Clachan of Kilwinning, was the first Monday of May. On the Sunday before, he made his appearance at church in his new garb.

As the young bird lingers about the nest, and is timid and reluctant to trust its untried wing, the fancy of the school-boy, when he is on the point of first leaving home, hovers amidst the scenes of his childhood, and wistfully looks back on a thousand little objects, which, till then, he had never thought were dear to him. In the calm still evening of that Sabbath, this sentiment pervaded the bosom of our youthful adventurer ; insomuch, that when the master invited him, as a testimony of his regard, to take tea with him, he declined it, saying, “ I am vera mickle obliged, sir ; but I'm thinking o' just taking a dauner round the Craighland parks.”

The good and simple Tannyhill was so deeply sensible of the feeling which dictated this refusal, that he said nothing, but followed Andrew with his eye, as he saw him moving away towards the fields. "That laddie," said he, to one of the neighbours who happened at the time to come up, "has mair in him than we gie him credit for—I wouldna be surprised to hear of him being something yet."

Andrew, after parting from the master, strayed into the Craigland plantations, and kept his course along a path that ran beneath the south side of the garden wall attached to the mansion-house, until he had entered the ancient policy of the domain.

Every thing about the Craighlands betokened the disposition of the Laird. The house was large, and built at different times. About eighty years before, an addition had been made, in such a manner, as to convert the end of the original mansion, or fortalice, into the principal front, by which a fine old avenue of plane trees was thrown, as it were, aside, and another approach was formed towards the new front, which looked into what, in

the improver's time, had been an inclosed parterre, or flower-garden—a low hewn stone wall, with square columns at intervals, surrounding the same; in the front of which, and at each side, was a gateway, formed by stately square pillars, crowned with sculptured pine apples. The plan and architecture, though in a formal, were certainly in something of a grand style, if not in a good taste; but all was in a state of ruinous neglect—the parterre was overgrown with weeds—vast bunches of nettles and docks filled the corners, and rose above the inclosing wall—the pine-apple heads of several of the pillars lay among them as they had fallen—and washing-tubs, and coals, and peats, were piled against the house, under the very windows of the dining-room. But if the mansion and grounds were neglected, the woods suffered little from sharing the same carelessness. The trees, left to themselves, had grown into every possible shape of picturesque luxuriance; and fortunately both for the admirer of the spot and the heir, the Laird would not suffer them to be touched, and, in consequence, the Craigland groves were among the most beautiful in the west of Scotland.

As Andrew sauntered alone into the chequered gloom of those old avenues, the hopes of his young imagination, in some degree, partook of the sober colouring that was settling on the distant vista of the landscape beyond, as the evening twilight gradually faded. He was still, it is true, a mere boy, but he was entering on that epoch of life when all the affectionate feelings of the bosom begin to concentrate into passion ; and for some time, by the gradual removal of his school-fellows, he had been, in a manner, left alone in the village—a situation calculated to nourish his sensibility for the beauties of nature.

At the bottom of the avenue ran a small stream, over which, in the gayer days of the Craiglunds, a wooden-bridge had been thrown, but it was long destroyed, and a plank supplied its place. On this plank Andrew seated himself, and for some time, in idleness, continued turning the pebbles with his toe in the channel. Mary Cunningham, who was out walking with one of the maids, happened, in returning home, to see him ; and stepping softly up behind him, covered his eyes suddenly with her hands—“ It’s you, Mary,” cried

he instinctively ; and the lively girl, unclosing his eyes, began to laugh and jeer at his new appearance. “ You may tak your fill o’t the night, Mary,” said he, “ but it winna be lang ye’ll hae’t in your power.”

“ Eh !” cried Mary seriously, “ whar are ye gaun ?”

“ I’m boun’ the morn’s morning to John Gledd’s, in Kilwinring.”

“ And what are ye to do there, Wheelie ?”

“ I’m thinking o’ making a forton.”

By this time the maid had joined them, and she interposed laughingly, saying, “ And when he’s a grand man, he’ll come and marry you, Miss Mary.”

“ O, that will be sic a while,” said Mary.

What more might have ensued, we cannot presume to conjecture ; but the conversation was interrupted by the shrill voice of Miss Mizy, heard echoing from within the garden, “ Mary Cunningham, whar are ye ? Come into the house, and tak your book immediantly ;” at the sound of which, Mary skipped away, followed by the maid ; and Andrew, rising from the bridge, returned home to his grandmother’s cottage.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHANGES.

Soon after this little incident, a lease of one of the Craigland farms fell in; and the augmentation which the Laird received in the rent at the renewal, fully justified his sister, Miss Mizey, to urge him to send Mary, as he had originally designed, to an Edinburgh boarding-school, to learn genteel manners, and how to sew satin-pieces, and play on the spinnet, the indispensable accomplishments at that period of an Ayrshire laird's daughter; and we do not know that any essential improvement has been made in the order of their education since.

By this arrangement, Andrew, during his apprenticeship with the messenger, saw Mary no more. Meanwhile, his assiduity at the desk was quite exemplary, as well as the determination with which

he was actuated to acquire a knowledge of his profession—if knowledge it might be called of the law, which consisted merely in being able to copy with fidelity that circuitous and perplexing verbosity, which is professedly intended to be clearer and plainer than the language of common sense. He was also distinguished from all the lads of his own age, for the preference which he gave to the knacky conversation of old and original characters. It signified not to him, whether the parties, with whom he enjoyed his leisure, were deemed douce or daft; it was enough that their talk was cast in queer phrases, and their minds ran among the odds and ends of things. By this peculiar humour, he was preserved in his clachan simplicity; while he made, as he often afterwards said himself, “his memory, like a wisdom-pock, a fouth of auld knick-knacketies—clues of experience, and shapings of matter, that might serve to clout the rents in the knees and elbows o’ straits and difficulties.”

An event, however, happened, which changed the prospects of his professional career. John Gledd had a shock of the palsy, and was obliged

to give up his business, by which Andrew was thrown on the world. He had, however, begun to acquire some confidence in himself; and this event did not so much depress him on his own account, as on that of his master. He had also by this time some suspicion that Kilwinning was not exactly the best place for becoming that grand man he was determined to be.

The illness of John Gledd, therefore, decided his fate and fortune. At first it was proposed, as he had got the pen of a ready writer, that he should try to obtain a place in the Clerk's Chamber of Irvine or Ayr, from which, like others of the legal fry, he might in time migrate to Edinburgh for a season, and then come back to Kilwinning, and endeavour to gather custom among the clients of his old master. But, after much deliberation, it was agreed between him and his grandmother, that he should "try his luck in London, that great city."

This apparently singular and bold resolution occurred to Martha, from the great good fortune that had attended a niece of her own who was settled there. The young woman had gone to the metropolis as

a servant with the Eglesham family, and had the good luck to attract the affections of Mr Ipsey, an old solicitor, of high reputation and great connexions, and who, finding he could not obtain her love on casier terms, had the good sense to make her his wife. Between Martha and her kinswoman no literary correspondence subsisted; but from time to time they heard of each other, and the old woman rejoiced at the prosperity of her niece, but without thinking, till John Gledd's misfortune, that it would ever be of any avail to her grandson. That event, however, directed her eyes towards Mrs Ipsey; and it was determined to solicit her influence with her husband on our hero's behalf. A letter was accordingly written by Andrew to that effect; and, by return of the post, a kind and considerate reply was received, honourable alike to Mrs Ipsey's spirit as a Scotchwoman, and to her husband's generosity as an Englishman. She informed Martha, that Mr Ipsey had retired from business several years; but that his successor, Mr Vellum, would receive Andrew, whenever it was convenient for him to come to London; and that as his outfit would probably

cost more than her aunt could well afford, she inclosed a bill for twenty pounds, not as a gift, but as a loan, to be repaid by Andrew whenever he could do so.

The receipt of this friendly and considerate letter was an auspicious omen, that every one in Stoneyholm regarded as a sure token of something grand in the future fortunes of Andrew ; and to none did it give more pleasure than to the master, whom our hero himself was the first to inform of his great good luck.

“ I'm glad to hear it, Wheelie,” said the kind and good Tannyhill ; “ but neither in this, nor in any thing else, be either overly lifted up, or cast down. Take some honest and honourable purpose in your mind, and make all your endeavours bend to the attainment thereof ; by that ye'll not only get forward in life, but your steps will be steady and respected, though your passing be slow. But, my bairn, set not your thought on riches as an end, but only as a means, for something more solid to yoursel, and pleasing in the sight of Him, who, in this favour, has given you erls of the servitude he claims from you—

the which is to be kindly and generous, but neither to be inconsiderate nor lavish.”

Andrew was fully sensible of the force of this advice ; and perhaps he was the more impressed with its practicable wisdom, inasmuch, as it was in unison with the natural and habitual course of his own reflections. For although he was not a Sir Isaac Newton, to reason in his boyhood about anything so well, as that philosopher’s meditations on the cause which occasioned the fall of an apple, he was, nevertheless, in his way, endowed with a peculiar genius, and had formed, even at this early period, a scheme of life and conduct, in which he was resolved to persevere.

CHAPTER IX.

PREPARATIONS.

IN some respects, the parish of Stoneyholm was, at the period of Andrew's departure, not so fortunate in its pastor, as its neighbour Dalmailing, of which the meek and pious Mr Balwhidder was then the incumbent, nor could it even be compared with the well-watered vineyard of Garnock, where the much celebrated Doctor Zachariah Pringle had, some years before, been appointed helper and successor. For the Reverend Doctor Dozadeal was a town-bred clergyman, and having been a tutor in the family of an Edinburgh advocate, had, of course, more genteel manners, and less warmth of heart, than is usually found among the genuine presbyters of the Scottish church.

In his address he was dry and grave, and measured out his sentences as apothegms of impressive

wisdom. He preferred the formal dinners of the heritors, to the sick-beds of the lowlier members of his flock. This was natural ; but he also studied, it was alleged, a little too earnestly, the advancement of his interests in this world ; and it was understood that he had only accepted the cure of the parish, in the hope, and under the promise, of one more suited to his habits. He took no pains to ingratiate himself with his parishioners—he knew few of them by name, and they seldom troubled him with their little cares and anxieties, the tempering of which, by advice and consolation, is perhaps the best, as it is the most amiable, of all a pastor's duties. His deportment and manners were, however, spotless and irreproachable ; and the habitual respect with which the Scottish peasantry regard their ministers, secured him all the external deference that is commonly paid by the people, to a character which religion, tradition, and patriotism, have hallowed to the national affections.

To a being constituted with the peculiar humours of our hero, such a man as Doctor Dozadeal could not fail to appear in the most unfavour-

able light. The whole of the framed and set-up manners which the Doctor had assumed, as particularly dignified, were disagreeable to Andrew, and his shrewdness detected, beneath the solemn cloak of his consequentiality, a character which, on account of its own endowments and merits, was really entitled to no extraordinary respect. Instead, therefore, of being impressed with those sentiments of awe and admiration, which the Doctor constantly, on all occasions, endeavoured to inspire, and which, from a few of the parishioners, he certainly sometimes obtained, Andrew was in the practice, even before he went to John Gledd's, of mocking his pomposity, and this irreverent disposition was none weakened at the time when the preparations were making for his departure for London. His grandmother, however, deemed it necessary that he should pay the Doctor a formal visit, prior to his departure, in order to receive his advice, according to a good old custom that had prevailed from time immemorial, and which will ever be preserved, while the intercourse between the minister and his parishioners is maintained on true christian and presbyterian princi-

ples. The Doctor himself would, perhaps, have been as willing as our hero, to have dispensed with the performance of this ancient homage, at least if we may judge by the result.

Andrew crept slowly and reluctantly to the Manse door, and on asking for the minister, was shewn into the parlour, where the Doctor was sitting at a table, slumbering in his elbow chair. A new book, with a few of the early leaves cut, lay before him, and an ivory folder, which had dropped from his hand, was lying on the floor at his foot.

His age might be near fifty ; in his person he was inclined to corpulency, and there was a certain degree of sallow lethargy in the cast and complexion of his features, the effect of habitual, rather than of constitutional, indolence.

Like most country clergymen in the forenoon, he was slovenly dressed. His breeches knees were only half-buttoned, his stockings ill drawn up, his shoes unfastened, and down in the heel, his neckcloth lax and dirty, and his whole appearance betokening a man little liable to be disturbed by visitors.

Andrew, on entering the room, made a bob with his head for a bow, and stood for about a minute swinging his hat in his hand, and looking round the walls and towards the ceiling, casting a momentary glance towards the Doctor, who, roused by his entrance, seemed to wait in expectation of some communication; seeing, however, that Andrew was not inclined to speak, the Doctor said, "Well, Andrew, what is your business with me?"

"My grannie sent me to tell you, sir, that I'm gaun to Lonon, to learn the law there,"—was the reply, uttered at, but not to, the Doctor; for by this time his eyes had settled on the dial-plate of the minister's watch, which hung over the mantle piece.

"And when do you go?" inquired the Doctor.

"As soon as my grannie can get my bit pack o' duds ready," said Andrew, in the same careless and awkward manner. The Doctor then requested him to sit down, and Andrew seated himself on the chair nearest the door.

"I hope," said the minister, "you will do your endeavour to give satisfaction to your employers."

“ An I dinna do that, what will come o’ me ?” was the answer.

“ You must study to acquire respectful manners, and to behave properly towards your superiors.” Andrew made no reply to this, but raising his eyes, which, on taking his seat, he had cast downward, he looked for a moment at the Doctor, who continued, “ For you must have often heard it remarked, that a man’s manners commonly make his fortune.”

“ Atweel I should ken that,” said Andrew, in the most indifferent manner ; “ for it was aye the first copy-line that the maister set, when he put us in sma’ write.”

The Doctor’s countenance was a little troubled by this reply, not only on account of the words, but the manner in which it was said ; and he resumed with an accent somewhat approaching to severity.

“ I have heard that you have good friends to take you by the hand in London, and it is well you are so fortunate ; for I doubt, young man, you will need all their assistance.”

The cheeks of Andrew flushed for a moment at

this observation, and he again darted a glance from under his brows towards the Doctor, who continued speaking, his voice gradually rising into the tone of a lecture.

“ Hitherto you have been but on the threshold of the world, and you have experienced none of its difficulties ; you will find now that mankind are, in general, an unfriendly race, and that in London they are very different from your rustic friends here in Stoneyholm. There the successful look proudly down on the poor, bestriding the path, to prevent new candidates from sharing with them the vantage ground of fortune.”

“ Gin they’ll no let me bye, I maun try to run through aneath their legs,” said Andrew, interrupting the oration with a sly indifferency, which effectually disconcerted the reverend Doctor, who, taking up the book from the table, said, in a tone equivalent to a dismissal, “ I wish you, young man, all manner of success, and that the blessing of Heaven may prosper your undertakings.”

“ I’m very mickle obliged to you,” replied Andrew, drily, and opening the door at the same

time, bobbed his head as carelessly as when he entered, and immediately retired.

“What did the minister say to you?” inquired Martha, when Andrew went home a little sulkily.

“I fancy he gied me his benison,” said Andrew. “But I’m thinking he’s no that weel versed in the folk o’ London, mair than mysel; for he would hae gart me trow, that they hae horns on their head to dish the like o’ me, and hooves to tread upon us when doon. For a’ that, I’m no fear’t.”

During the short remainder of the time he spent at Stoneyholm, he seemed, as the period of his departure drew near, to attach himself more and more to the different gaffers and goodies of the village, and to enjoy their peculiarities with a keener relish than ever. His little attentions, in this respect, gave a degree of eclat to the event of his removal, which could hardly have been expected to attend the transit of one so young, and so slenderly connected in the parish. On the evening immediately before he set out on his journey, a number of the farmer lads, who had been at the master’s school with him, came in to

the clachan to bid him farewell, and a little dance was, in consequence, struck up in Saunders Chapin's public. With the friendliness and the good-humour of the party, he was evidently much delighted; but an old man, who happened to look in upon the ploy, said, "that Wheelie took it a' as ane of some degree;"—a remark which was afterwards remembered, much to the credit of the sagacious observer, and which, although there could be as yet no particular change in Andrew's demeanour, would imply that he felt himself no longer belonging to the same class as his youthful associates. It is for philosophers, however, to assign the proper source of that which the village sage so early discovered as an omen of success.

CHAPTER X.

DEPARTURE.

IN the morning on which our hero was to bid a long adieu to his native village, he was awake and stirring with the lark. It was the eye of summer, and the weather was clear and beautiful. The smoke rose from his grandmother's chimney as straight as a column, and stood over it like a high-spreading tree, long before the symptoms of housewifery appeared in any other cottage in the hamlet; for the Glasgow carrier was to pass at sunrise, and Andrew was requested to be in readiness by that time to go with him. When the carrier stopped to call him, he came instantly out alone, with his box on his shoulder, and the door was immediately closed behind; no one saw Martha till long after he was out of sight. The mas-

ter, who was abroad to convoy him a part on his way, was the first who visited her, and he found her sitting with the Bible on her knee, wiping her spectacles: there were drops on the page, which shewed what had dimmed the glasses.

In going along the road, several of the lads with whom Andrew had spent the preceding evening were standing at the end of the loans which led to the farms where they were as herds or as ploughmen, and they blithely shook hands with him as he passed, hoping he would return with gold in goupens. But the cart soon drove beyond the limits of the circle which contained all his school-fellows, and reached the head of a rising ground, where, the road diverging behind the hills, Stoneyholm, and the woods and fields of the Craiglunds, are hidden from the view. At this spot our young adventurer paused, and looked back;—no presentiment of evil overcast his hopes at that moment, but a number of gay and cheerful recollections endeared the scene to him, and he said to the carrier, “It’s a blithesome place you, and I’m thinking it may be a while before

I'll see sic bonny trees and green braes, as the woods and lands o' the Craiglands."

After this, he continued to walk beside the carrier for some time in silence ; and, indeed, nothing is remembered of the remainder of his journey to Glasgow, nor did he himself recollect any thing he passed, till the High Church steeples were in sight, which the carrier pointed out, by touching him on the back ; for he was then seated on the cart, and had been for some time in a state of drowsy reverie, that seemed almost like sleep.

At Glasgow he was conducted to his relation, Mr Treddles the manufacturer. It was about three o'clock when he arrived at the house ; and as the worthy fabricator of muslins told ourselves at the last Circuit, " there never was surely a drol-ler like thummert o' a creature seen entering a biggit land.—He had on a pair o' dark-blue pat-dyed rig-and-fur muckle-wheel worsted stockings, though it was a day that dogs lay panting wi' their tongues out, and his coat was cut wi' an eye to a considerable increase baith in his bulk and stature. We were just gaun to tak our kail, and the gudewife bade Andrew sit in and partake, but

he said,—‘ Od, Mistress Treddles, ye’re far in the day wi’ your meal-time. I thought ye would hae had that o’er by twal hours, and as I hae ate the piece on the road that grannie gied me, I’m no that ready yet for ony mair—so wi’ your will, I’ll e’en gae out and look at the ferlies and unco’s o’ Glasgow.’

“ Wi’ that,” quo’ Mr Treddles, “ he whiskit like a whitteret out o’ the door, and we saw na-thing o’ him till mair than twa hours after, when he came home, and just confounded us, for he had been to see King William, and was up at the Hie Kirk—I’ll ne’er forget the laugh we got, at what he said o’ the College. It’s been a sprose amang us ever sin syne.—‘ Heh !’ quo’ he, ‘ but yon’s a gruesome like place ; the very winnocs are like the peering een and bent brows of auld Philso-phorum.’

“ It happened that night,” continued the manufacturer in his narration, “ that we had some neighbours in to their tea, and the mistress had provided short-bread and seed-cake, wi’ some o’ her jelly and marmolet, according to the use and wont o’ such occasions. When the tea was filled

out, our friend drew in his chair to the table, and wasna slack either wi' teeth or claw on the dainties.—‘Ye seem to like that kind o' bread, Andrew,’ said the mistress.—‘Atweel,’ quo' he, ‘it's no ill to tak,’ and wi' that he continued to work awa' at it wi' the greatest industry; and when he was satisfied, he set back his chair, and took the chumla-lug, in afore Mrs M'Vicar, the major's widow, a prejinct elderly woman, that never forgot it, till about nine o'clock, when he rose, and lifting one of the candles, said, ‘Mistress Tred-dles, I'll awa to my bed; for I maun be up to get the Edinburgh carrier the morn's morning by skriegh o' day—Whar am I to cuddle?’—I thought we would have a' deet at this. But when the lass took him wi' another light to the stranger's room, Mr Plank, that was o' the company, a deep and observant man, said, ‘Yon lad's no to be laugh'd at—He'll learn mair havens belyve; and if he pursues his ain end wi' honesty, and as little in the awe o' the world as he seems to feel at present, he'll thrive in London, or any other place, wherein his lot may be cast.’”

By this account, it would really seem that An-

drew, in his outset, had produced a sensation even in Glasgow. It was certainly, however, not such as would have led any one to suppose he would ever become a favourite with the elegant and fashionable.

On the following morning, as he said himself, by "the skriegh o' day," he was mounted with his "pack of duds" on the top of one of the Edinburgh carts; and in due time, in the afternoon, reached Linlithgow, where the carriers stopped. "Lithgow for wells, and Glasgow for bells," is a saying that few schoolboys in Scotland have not heard; and Andrew was deeply versed in those honourable traditions which exalt the affections of Scottish patriotism so highly, that, even with the eyes of manhood, the Scotchman is rarely to be found, who, with all that travel and experience teach to the contrary, will not contend for the superiority of the national monuments of his native land—to say nothing whatever of the superior excellence of her institutions. In Andrew this partiality was deeply impressed; and, with mingled sentiments of admiration and sorrow, he contemplated the ruins of the royal pa-

lace, and inspected the dilapidated fountains which gave rise to the rhyme quoted. Linlithgow, in its day, was the Versailles of Scotland; and the Court, which resided there prior to the Reformation, was justly esteemed at the time one of the gayest in Europe. Holyrood and Stirling stand more dignified in the prejudices of the country, by tales of dark conspiracies, and bold adventures; but the courtesies of chivalry and song are associated with Linlithgow.

While Andrew was hovering round the skirts of the Palace, an old woman, who happened at the time to be passing, with a large key, and a smaller tied to it, dangling in her hand, said, "Hey, lad, would you like to see the Queer and the King's seat?" This was a temptation that Andrew was not then in a humour to resist; but before indulging himself, he inquired what the sight would cost.

"Ye maun gie me twopence, I'se warrant," said the woman.

"'Deed no, lucky," replied Andrew; "fools and their siller are soon parted. I'll gie you twal pennies, gin ye like to tak it, and ye had better

do ; for I'm gaun out o' the kintra, and ye'll hae nae chance to get either plack or bawbee frae me a' your days."

After some altercation Andrew was admitted, and sat himself in the very seat where the gallant and unfortunate James of Flodden-field used to hear mass ; and he saw also, with as sincere a faith in the truth of the story as any boy of his age did in the age when it happened, the chapel-aisle, where the apparition of St Andrew warned the King from that fatal campaign, which the Muses of Scotland have never ceased to deplore, and never more impressively than in our own time, converting, as it were, by a beautiful alchemy, the memory of national disgrace and misfortunes into motives of national pride, that tend to add vigour to the energies of patriotism.

CHAPTER XI.

EDINBURGH.

THE feelings with which the relics of regal grandeur at Linlithgow had inspired our hero, were greatly augmented, when, at an early hour next day, he beheld the Castle of Edinburgh rising above the mists that floated round its rocky base. But instead of indulging his curiosity when he reached the carrier's quarters, he immediately engaged a porter to carry his box, and to conduct him to Leith, where he was that day to embark in a London trader. Fortunately the vessel was not to sail till the evening, and this allowed him several hours to inspect the curiosities of the city. The porter who had carried his trunk, on understanding his intention, offered his services, but they were declined; and for two reasons, the principal

of which was, that he would expect payment for his pains ; and the other, because he was a highlandman, that thought Macallum More a greater man than Nebuchadnezzar.

Considering Andrew's intuitive perception of character, it is not probable from this opinion, for we quote his own words, that he sustained any loss by refusing the Highlander's guidance ; but in visiting the different parts of the Old Town, the Castle, and Holyrood-house, he sometimes wandered ; and as the Edinburgh boys are not less inclined to mischief than their contemporaries elsewhere, his inquiries were not always answered with a strict adherence to truth, or the most benevolent wish to set him in the right. However, he nevertheless contrived to see all the most remarkable objects to which history has attached any importance ; and having satisfied himself in that respect, he dined on "parliaments" and "quality," by which he both saved money and time, for he ate his dinner as he walked along.

As the time approached when it was requisite he should go back again to Leith, he met two la-

dies ; one of them was a tall elegant girl, with a sprightly fashionable air ; the other, considerably older, and of a more sedate demeanour—It was Mary Cunningham, and one of the governesses of the boarding-school where she had so long been.

“ Wheelie !” exclaimed Mary with delight, the moment she saw him, “ what’s brought you here ?”

Andrew for an instant stood aghast, to be so addressed by a lady so fine and fashionable ; but seeing who it was, recovered himself, as it were, with an elastic bound, and said, in his familiar manner, “ I cam frae the Stoneyholm to Glasgow on Johnny Gottera’s cart, and syne here wi’ the Edinburgh carrier.”

“ Did ye ever see such a modiwart like thing ?” said Mary laughingly, turning to the governess ; “ but he’s as pawkie as a fairy.—Can ye say a’ your fifty Psalms yet, Wheelie ?”

“ May be I might, an’ ye would hearken me again,” was his answer, a little curiously, however. But to this Mary made no direct reply, only saying, “ What are ye come to Edinburgh for ?”

“ I’m on my way to London.”

“ To London, Wheelie !” exclaimed Mary with

astonishment ; and then she added briskly, “ and so ye haena made your fortune at Kilwinning ? ”

Andrew blushed, and looked his reply.

“ Miss Cunningham,” interposed the governess, “ this is a very improper conversation.”

With these words they parted ; Mary laughing gaily as Andrew, pleased and sheepishly, moved also forward in the opposite direction. When he had walked about twenty paces, he paused, and looked back ; Mary, at the same time, also looked behind, and, seeing him, kissed her hand in a gay and triumphant manner.

Andrew, although strangely affected by the sight of the towering lily that Mary had grown, and overborne by her sprightliness, was delighted at the vivid recollection which she seemed to retain of the principal incidents with which her image, as a lassie, was associated in his recollection. It did not appear to him that her banter was embittered with any scorn ; on the contrary, it had a flavour of kindness in it, which a youth of seventeen could not but enjoy with something allied to hope and pleasure. With a buoyant bosom, and a light step, he pursued his way to Leith, where he immediate-

ly went on board the vessel that was to him the bark of destiny.

For the first two days after the trader left Leith, like most of the passengers, he was so dreadfully afflicted with what Doctor Pringle calls “the grievous prostration,” that he could not raise his head; but still there was something so queer in the manner in which he bore his sufferings, that it at once amused and interested his fellow-passengers. They saw by his appearance that he was only a simple country boy; but the self-possession which he evinced in the intervals of the malady, shewed that, though clad in hodden-grey, he was not entirely made of rustic stuff. He, however, took no part in the conversation; and the opinion of his shrewdness and sagacity was chiefly formed from his looks, and the manner in which he set about his little offices; and chiefly by an observation on the biscuit, which was exceedingly hard; “It’s very good,” said he, “and will eat wi’ pains.”

On the day before reaching the Thames, his sickness had so much abated, that he began to enter into the humours of his companions, and an opportunity was not long wanting to shew the irrepressible drollery of his character

Among the passengers was a spruce young man, who had been a student at the University of Edinburgh; foppish in his dress, stiff and conceited in his manners, and singularly fastidious towards all on board, insomuch, that he was generally disliked; but still, he so conducted himself, that he had not been exposed to any open ridicule. Andrew perceived how he was considered, and entering into the feelings of the party towards this unfortunate sprig of delicacy and condescension, addressed him after dinner, when the whole party, in consequence of a shower, were seated round the table below.

“I’m thinking,” said he, very gravely, but at the same time looking pawkily and peeringly round the table, “that I have seen you before—and that ye hae had a roasted goose mony a day for your dinner—Were na ye prentice to Thomas Steek, the tailor in our parish?”

The student looked aghast while the laugh rose universal against him, and he repelled this assault on his gentility with the most vehement indignation.

“Na,” said Andrew, “I’m sure ye needna be

ashamed o' your trade—although it was thought that ye had fled the country-side for spoiling the cut o' Tammy Daidle's breeks. It's an honest calling a tailor, and I ne'er heard it said that ye were gien to cabbaging; but the auld wives thought ye werena sae gleg wi' your needle, as some others that had served their time with the same master, though they said ye dippet your spoon in the parritch deeper than ony o' them."

The unfortunate fop was petrified; every one but himself perceived the drift of the curious little country boy, and sat in admiration of what might be the issue. At last, the student, no longer able to restrain his rage, threatened to slay Andrew on the spot, who, nevertheless, with the most perfect nonchalance, replied,—“Ye had better no try that; for gin ye strike me for what I'm saying, I'll gar ye prove before the Lords that you're no a tailor; and I am sure if it be sae that ye're no o' that craft, I'll refer to the present company, if ever they saw a creature so like ane. But its no your faut, and if the han' o' God has made you wi' shanks like ellwands, and sma' fingers to pook needles through clathe, we a' ken ye canna help it.”

The student, under his foppery, was not destitute of sense, and by the little descriptive touches in this last sentence, suspecting that Andrew was not really serious, endeavoured to turn the tables. But our hero was more than his match at banter; and before the end of the voyage had so raised himself in the opinion of his fellow-passengers, that they were universally of opinion he was calculated to make his way in London with great success, in spite of his little awkward figure, and the droll simplicity of his manners.

CHAPTER XII.

LONDON.

IMMEDIATELY on his arrival, Andrew was conducted to the house of his relation, Mrs Ipsey, where having received a note to Mr Vellum, the solicitor, with whom her husband had provided him a situation, he went immediately to deliver it. It was rather adventurous for one so fresh from the country to attempt, on the first day, to find his way in London, with only "a gude Scotch tongue" for his guardian geni; the consequence was what might have been anticipated. He lost his way, and went wandering through the labyrinth of streets in Mary-le-bone, seeking, as it were, an outlet; his heart almost perishing within him. In this dilemma, however, he met with a

singular stroke of good fortune. Charles Pierston had, about a year before, been taken into his uncle's counting-house in the city, and happening to be in that part of the town on business, they accidentally met. The joy of this encounter was excessive—it rescued Andrew from despair.

Charles was grown a gay and elegantly-formed youth, dressy and modish even to foppery, for his uncle was liberal and indulgent to him, perhaps to a fault; but he was still the same frank, generous, and warm-hearted lad, and although no contrast either in appearance or character could be more striking than what these two school-fellows presented, he shook hands with Andrew, and welcomed him to London at once with jokes and shouts of gladness.

“ Lord bless me, but I am blithe to see you,” cried our hero, his spirit rebounding up into all its wonted self-possession, in finding himself again under the encouraging countenance of “ a kent face.”—“ I have been lost amang thir houses, man, for hours, till I believe my head's no right. Od sake, if I wasna ready to lie down an' d̄ee, had it no been for shame.”

“Why didn’t you call a coach?” said Pierston, ready to expire with laughter at the sincerity of Andrew’s description of his perplexity.

“O, Charlie Pierston!” exclaimed the novice, in the utmost astonishment; “me hire a coach! Mary Conn in a coach!*—the folk would hae thought I had gane by mysel—Na, na, demented as I hae been, I was nae so far left to mysel, tō be guilty of ony sic extravagance—Me hire a whole coach!—Ah! Charlie, Charlie, I maun ca’ mair canny; and ye ken I never had ony turn for gentility like you. But ye maun now shew me the way to Lincoln’s Inn, whar I’m gaun to learn the law.”

Charles, delighted as he was to see his old and queer school-fellow, did not much relish the idea of walking with so singular figure in the streets; accordingly, when they reached the first stand, he called a coach; but, before stepping in, Andrew said, “Now, mind Charlie, ye’re to pay for’t a’, I’ll no be a single bawbee; for I hae laid it down

* Ayrshire proverb.

as a rule no to waste a plack on ony sort of pleasure."

"Well, well, never mind that; I'll settle for the coach this time," said Charles, "and so jump in."

When they were seated, Pierston gathered from him an account of his hopes and prospects, and he was irresistibly tempted to play him an initiatory prank; accordingly, when the coach reached the door of Mr Vellum's chambers, he leaped briskly out, and slipping the fare into the coachman's hand, whispered him to get all he could more from the other gentleman. The coachman was rogue enough for his own interest to enter into the frolic; and Charles hurrying away, pretending he was pressed for time, and in his flight calling back to Andrew that he would see him soon again, left him in the paws of the coachman.

"Two shillings, your honour," said the fellow, when he had assisted Andrew to alight.

"What's that for? Didna the ither lad pay you? It was him that hired you—ye needna look to me for ony payment."

There was a degree of tremour and indecision

in the manner in which this answer was given, that encouraged the coachman to enforce his demand more resolutely, and he repeated it.

“I tell you, man, that it’s no me ye’re to apply to—What the deevil, if a frien’ hire a chaise, and gie me a hurl, am I to pay the hire?—I never heard o’ sic extortion—go awa’ wi’ you, man.”

Jehu had some relish of humour himself, and played still farther with the apprehensions of our hero, saying, he should pay for his friend, and settle it afterwards with him.

“It’s ill getting a breck aff a Highlanman—Get twa shillings frae that flea-luggit rinnagate Charlie Pierston, who had ne’er a doit that didna burn a hole in his pouch!—I ken him o’er weel, to let his score gang to my lawin.—No, my lad, it’s of no use to argol bargol wi’ me. I’ll no be bow wow’t out of my shillings ony hoo! and as I said before, ye maun just gang your ways, for scot nor lot will I pay you, or the like o’ you, if I should be damn’d for’t, which is a mickle word for me to say;” and with that he walked briskly up the steps that led to Mr Vellum’s chambers; while the coachman mounted his box, roaring with

laughter, like the mill-lade at Kilwinning-brig in a speat, as Andrew afterwards told Pierston.

Mr Vellum was an able, acute, and intelligent man of business, in the prime of life, active, gentlemanly, and decisive. The moment that he cast his eye on our hero, he perceived he was an original, nor did he like him the less for his uncouth appearance. His knowledge of the world had indeed taught him, that, in all the secondary and laborious departments of business, such characters are of the most invaluable description; and in consequence, much to the amazement of several spruce young fellows, who were casting contemptuous glances aside on the stranger, as they plied their nimble quills, he received him with unusual cordiality.

“I am very glad you have come,” said Mr Vellum, “for it is now term time, and I doubt not you will soon make yourself useful.”

“I’ll no fail in the endeavour,” replied Andrew; “but if I dinna at first come up to your expectation, ye maun just bear wi’ me till my han’s sooplet at the wark.”

“ I shall be satisfied with your endeavour, and you may now take your place at the desk.”

“ No the day, sir,” said Andrew ; “ for I hae tint sic a time by losing mysel in coming from Mr Ipsey’s, that I maun look after the bit pack wi’ my claes before dark. I’ll be wi’ you, however, by break o’ day the morn’s morning.”

Mr Vellum acquiesced, and Andrew, invigorated by the satisfactory reception he had met with, and perhaps unconsciously also by the little experience he had gleaned in his adventure with Pierston, then proceeded with confidence to the house of a Mrs Callender, whom Mrs Ipsey had recommended to him for lodgings.

It was situated in a small court, off one of the streets, in the vicinity of Red Lion Square, and in the neatness of all its appearance, justified the character which he had received of the landlady.

In consequence of coming from Mrs Ipsey, Andrew was shewn the first floor ; but when informed that the rent was a guinea a-week, he turned up his eyes, and gasped as if a load was on his heart. At last he was enabled to articu-

late, "Ye'll hae ither rooms!" and being answered in the affirmative, was conducted up stairs, where a bargain was concluded for an attic, at the rate of four shillings and sixpence per week. But we must not undertake to describe the details of his household arrangements; we shall, therefore, pass over the conversation which took place at the bargain-making, with simply remarking, that although Andrew thought Mrs Callender "dreadfu' dear" in the rent of her room, yet he was much satisfied with her orderly house and motherly appearance; and with all expedient haste proceeded to the wharf to get his luggage brought home. This, however, involved difficulties which he had not anticipated.

He guessed from the length of the way, which did not seem abridged by the necessity he was under of inquiring, at every turn, for "the road to Wapping," that the expence of portorage for his trunk would be considerable, and he made up his mind to go the whole extent of a shilling. But on reaching the wharf, to his inexpressible astonishment, no man could be found who would undertake the task for less than five shillings, the

very mention of which brought at once an interjection from the innermost chambers of his soul, and a cold sweat on his brows. The steward of the vessel advised him to take a coach ; but this was a suggestion of prodigality still more insurmountable ; so that, seeing no other likely way of getting the trunk carried, he manfully resolved to bear it on his own shoulders.

By this time it was almost dark, and there was some risk that the landmarks, which he had observed to guide his way, would be soon obscured from his view, if he did not make haste. Having therefore shifted his coat and waistcoat, for the old ones which he had worn in the passage, he got the trunk on his back, and bravely set forward from Miller's wharf to find his way to Holborn, knowing that if he was once there, he would soon discover the road to Mrs Callender's. But to carry a well-packed trunk through the crowded streets of London, was no easy task to a stranger ; and long before he reached the Royal Exchange, the shades of darkness had deepened over-head, and the lights and lamps around him shone forth in all their wonted nightly splendour. Still, how-

ever, with indefatigable perseverance, winding his toilsome way along, he at length, after many halts, reached St Sepulchre's church, where he placed the trunk on the wall of the church-yard, and rested to breathe and to wipe his forehead.

He had not travelled so burdened unnoticed ; a gang of street-robbers early marked him for their prey, and dogged him like blood-hounds in the track of their game ; but his wariness had prevented an attack, till they saw him at rest.

One of those freebooters, a little in advance before the others, passed him a few paces, and giving a loud shriek, fell down on the pavement, seemingly in convulsions. In the first impulse of the moment, Andrew, as the thieves had calculated, started forward to his assistance ; but fortunately in doing so, his trunk fell from the railing. The jeopardy in which he saw that it was immediately placed, by the companions of the impostor running towards it, checked his humanity, and he clung to it with the fond anxiety of a mother over her darling in danger. The thieves cursed his inhumanity, and the man in convulsions instantly

recovering, rose, and walked away with an alacrity which at once astonished and alarmed our adventurer, who required no farther testimony respecting the character of the parties.

Saving only in this incident, he reached the house of Mrs Callender unmolested ; and nothing could exceed the laud and admiration of that worthy dame, when she heard what he had accomplished, and the presence of mind with which he had preserved his trunk from the Philistines.

“ I’m sure,” said she, “ Mr Wylie, that you must stand in need of your tea. Do sit down, and in the parlour I’ll get it ready, with a nice comfortable bit of toast.”

“ I would like that unco weel,” replied Andrew ; “ but it’s dainties I mauna think o’. So I’ll thank you to get me a mutchkin of strong yill and a cooky, which will baith serve me for fourhours and supper.”

Mrs Callender declared, that she did not believe any such things could be had in London. But she could get him a slice of ham and a pint of porter.

“ The woman’s deleerit !” exclaimed Andrew ;

“ does she think that I’ll make a sow o’ mysel wi’ drinking a whole pint o’ porter ?”

Presently, however, recollecting that there was some difference between the Scotch and English measure, he inquired the expence ; and having saved the portorage of his luggage, he adopted her suggestion as to the porter, but he would yield to no such seduction as the ham.

Having recruited his strength in Mrs Callender’s parlour, he proposed going to bed, as he was much tired. “ But,” said he, “ I needna be laying in ony stores till I see about me in the morning ; so that gin ye hae ony sic thing as a candle-doup about the house, I’ll be obliged if ye’ll lend me’t the night.”

This request needed some explanation. In the end, however, a mutual understanding took place on the subject ; but without materially tending to exalt the character for liberality of our hero in the opinion of his landlady. Nevertheless, she lent him the candle.

Having retired for the night to his chamber, and extinguished the light, he knelt down at the bedside. But the hopes, the wishes, and the an-

xieties, which the young adventurer communicates to Heaven in such a time, belong to a more holy strain of feeling than we may here venture to unfold.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

MR VELLUM had for clients several persons of high rank, and, among others, the Earl of Sandford. His Lordship was still on the gay side of thirty, and justly considered one of the most elegant men of the age ; but from the date of his marriage with Lady Augusta Spangle, the daughter of the Marquis of Aberside, he had disappointed the expectations of his friends. Instead of taking that splendid part in the deliberations of the kingdom, for which he seemed naturally, by his animated temperament and lofty eloquence, peculiarly qualified, he suddenly rushed into the whirlpool of fashionable dissipation, and squandered his estate and talents with a vehemence that not only surpris-

sed, but alarmed, while it mortified his friends and admirers ; for it appeared to be the result of some wild, yet voluntary resolution, as if he sought, by the velocity of a headlong career, to escape the miseries of some mysterious sorrow.

When his Lordship first entered the arena of fashion, he was strikingly handsome, and the expression of his countenance, which was nobly intelligent, indicated great elevation of sentiment, tinged with an urbanity full of playfulness and good humour ; but, at the period of which we are now speaking, he was become pale and slender, an elegant listlessness pervaded his whole frame, and his voice, which was naturally clear, and finely modulated, had dwindled into an habitual monotonous *simper*, suitable indeed to the small topics he affected to discuss, but which he evidently cared as little about as he did for any thing else. Occasionally, however, his true character would shine out, and shew that this foppery was but assumed, and that he might still be roused to better things, and stand forth in the erect superiority of a genius, conscious of its innate strength, and ready,

when sufficient cause required, to manifest its incalculable power.

About the time that our hero arrived in London, it had been remarked, that the Earl went less into company than formerly, and that he sometimes spent the morning in the House of Lords, yawning, it is true, to the tuneless eloquence and metaphysical distinctions of some litigious advocate from the north, addressing, with equal effect, the Chancellor and the woolsacks, and no less delighting the attendant solicitors, than the faded worthies of Elizabeth's reign in the tapestry, who, in appeal cases, are commonly all the spectators. Once in the evening, when he happened, in the course of that spring, to obey a summons of the House, on an important political question, he was so far excited by the conflict of debate, that he actually made a speech of three sentences, so judicious and well expressed, that it tingled in the ears of the most experienced senators with the thrill of a new sensation, and was hailed as the symptom of a redeeming spirit, that might in time convert him from those pursuits which had equally injured his health, his fortune, and his character.

Some time after this, his Lordship had occasion to confer with Mr Vellum, and it happened, when he called at his chambers, that our hero was the only person within. A brief colloquy, in consequence, took place at the door, which had the effect of interesting his Lordship's curiosity; inasmuch, that partly with the intention of resting a few minutes, perhaps more, however, with the design of extracting a little amusement, he was induced to walk into the office, and take a seat on one of the elevated stools at the desk. Andrew had no conception of the rank of the visitor; and as he was not altogether satisfied with this freedom, he stood warily holding the inner door open, as an intimation to his Lordship that he ought not to remain; but the oddity of his appearance, and the sly suspicion of his looks, with the simplicity of his manners, diverted the peer, who, after inspecting him through a quizzing glass from head to foot, said, with an affectation of fashionable inanity, swinging his feet at the same time, "These stools of your's, young man, are very tall."

"Ay," replied Andrew, "they're gay and heigh."

The assumed indifference of the Earl was almost

discomposed by the flatness of this answer ; and pulling out his handkerchief to hide the effect, said, at the same time, “ Pray, friend, where were you caught ? ”

“ Sir, I never was catched,” was the indignant answer.

“ Indeed ! ” said his Lordship, “ how then came you to London ? ”

“ Hoo shou’d I come ? ”

“ A very satisfactory answer, I must confess,” rejoined the Earl ; “ and I have no doubt you had a great deal of pleasure in your travels ? ”

“ Ah, trowth ! ” quoth our hero, “ if the bock-ing the soul out o’ the body be ony pleasure, I had enough o’ that pleasure ! Gude forgie me, but I was amaist tempted to mak awa’ wi’ mysel. Eh ! I thought if I could hae dee’t, it would hae been a satisfaction. Na, na, sir, I would nae advise my sworn enemy to come in a ship by sea frae Scotland.”

The Earl, still preserving all due seriousness, said, “ May I presume to inquire if you are a lawyer ? ”

“ I’m learning,” replied Andrew, modestly.

“ A very judicious answer,” was the ironical observation of his Lordship ; “ and how long may you have been in the profession ?”

“ Before coming here, I was weel on to three years with John Gledd, the messenger, and I hae been three days wi’ Mr Vellum.”

“ It is an honourable profession, and I doubt not you will become a distinguished ornament to it—in time,” said his Lordship drily.

“ I’m thinking it’s a gay an kittle trade though ; but I’ll ettle my best,” replied Andrew, none disconcerted.

“ But,” resumed the Earl, “ what do you think of London ?”

“ Poo !” cried the clerk ; “ London ! a whin brick houses. O, man, if ye could but see Glasgow and Edinburgh—there you would see something—look at Holyrood-House, that’s a palace for you—but St James’s here, it’s just like an auld to’booth. But, sir, ye’ll hae to gae awa’, for its the time for me to gang for my dinner, that I may be back to keep the house—and I hae a notion your business is no very particular the day.”

“It certainly,” said his Lordship, “will keep to another day; but where do you dine?”

“At a very creditable house, sir; the Caledonian, in a neighbour street.”

“And how much may you pay?” inquired his Lordship, with unaffected curiosity, prompted by an interest which he began to take in this original.

“Sevenpence; and a bawbee to the laddie,” replied Andrew.

“Good Heavens!” exclaimed the Earl, touched with a sentiment of compassion, never having by any accident before heard at what rates the humble and industrious youth of the vast metropolis are obliged to live.

“Ay, it’s awfu’ dear,” said Andrew, mistaking the cause of his Lordship’s astonishment; “but the victual’s good;” adding, “it’s a hard thing, sir, to live in London. Some take a mutchkin of porter to their dinner, but I sloken my drowth wi’ Adam’s wine.”

“I presume, then, that you do not allow yourself much indulgence in public amusements?” said his Lordship.

“As to that,” replied Andrew, “I take my share, for the singers are far better than ours; indeed they hae tunes and voices like leddies and gentlemen. But, sir, it’s no canny to gang near them; for nae further gane than yestreen, last night ye ken, when I was harkening to twa singing like nightingales, in Lincoln’s-Inn Square, a ne’er-doweel pocket-picker whuppet the napkin out of my pouch, wi’ the slippery hand o’ an evil spirit, before I kent whar I was. Od, sir, but there’s a terrible power o’ ill-doers about London.”

“O, I understand; you mean by the public amusements, listening to the ballad-singers in the street,” said the Earl, drolling.

“I can assure you,” replied Andrew, “they were na like ballad-singers at a’; and it’s my notion they were play-actors out o’ bread.”

“Have you been at the theatres?” said his Lordship.

“No yet, but I’m gaun. Our clerks are to treat me some night soon; and they say—they a’ say—that I’ll see—Gude kens what I’ll no see; but it maun be something vera extraordinar, for they’re just out o’ the body about catching the effec, as

they ca't. However, effecs here, or effecs there, it's no right o' you, sir, to keep me clishmaclaver-ing when I should be taking my pick, that the master's wark mayna gae by."

The Earl admitted the justness of the observa-tion ; and perceiving the roguery at the bottom of the intended treat on the part of the other clerks, became desirous himself to enjoy some of the vir-gin fancies of Andrew ; he therefore pretended, as he had not found Mr Vellum, he would write a note for him.

Being furnished accordingly with the necessary implements, he requested the Solicitor that Andrew might be sent to a particular coffee-house, at ele-ven o'clock that evening, with a letter for Servinal, his valet, who would be there to meet him ; and that Mr Vellum might have some idea of the ob-ject of this singular request, he added, "The Count-ess receives masques, but your clerk can take a part without any disguise."

" Now," said his Lordship to Andrew as he folded up the letter, " this relates to a matter on which my heart is much set, and I rely upon your fidelity in placing it safe in Mr Vellum's own hand."

“ That ye may do, and sleep sound upon’t,” was the answer ; “ for be he living, or be he dead, I will see him ; and I wouldna that a thing gi’en to me in the way of trust was mislippent—No, though I was to die on the spot. But O, sir, really I’m growing uneasy ; for if I dinna get my dinner noo, thae deevils, our clerks, will be back ; and if they fin’ out that I’m toom, they’ll fish to famish me. It would therefore, sir, be very obliging, if ye hae done your pleasure and needs, to gae quietly awa’, and let me rin for my bit chack o’ dinner.”

The good humour of the Earl, perhaps we ought to add his habitual politeness, could not withstand the reiterated urgency of this appeal, and he accordingly withdrew, renewing his injunctions for the careful delivery of the letter. But this was unnecessary ; Andrew was fully impressed with the importance of letters addressed by clients to their solicitors, and well aware that his future success in life depended quite as much on his integrity as upon any other quality.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MASQUERADE.

WHEN Andrew came back after dining, Mr Velum, who had been all the forenoon in Westminster-Hall, was in the office ; and on reading the Earl's epistle, which our hero faithfully delivered into his own hands, he was not a little diverted by its contents.

“ Did the gentleman,” said he, “ tell you who he was ?”

“ I never speert,” replied Andrew ; “ but surely he would put his name to the letter.”

“ O yes ; but I cannot imagine what has induced him to write to me on such a subject.”

“ He maun answer for that himsel’,” said Andrew ; “ but he seemed very particular. It's surely something very particular, sir, for he stayed so

lang, and asked so many questions, that I was obligated to tell him to gang awa'."

"But what sort of a man did you find him?"

"I'm thinking," replied Andrew, "that he's something in the perfoomery line, for he had a fine scented pocket-napkin, and was wondrous prejnct in his words—a' on chandler pins; and baith in shape and habit, he was a slimmer piece of gentility."

"I hope," said the Solicitor, "that you treated him with all due respect, for he was no other than the Earl of Sandyford."

"O, Mr Vellum, what a stupid fool fallow he maun hae thought I was—a yerl!—Me speaking in the way I did to him, and he a' the time a yerl! Howsoever, he canna hae't to say that I neglected his business, or didna mind yours, and I'll mak up-for't to him in decorum at another time."

"I hope so," said Mr Vellum jocularly; "but I have something particularly for you to do this evening. You will take a letter from me to one Mr Servinal, as directed; he is a civil man, and I have particular reasons for wishing you to become

acquainted with him. I need not say more, than that you will endeavour to make yourself agreeable to him."

"If it's for your interest, sir," replied Andrew, "ye need hae nae fear o' that. But eleven o'clock is an awful time o' night to be seeking after ony honest business."

"True," said Mr Vellum ; "but in our profession, all hours and times must be at the command of our clients."

"Say na mair, say na mair ; by night or by day, Mr Vellum, I'll try to do my part," replied Andrew ; and in this manner the prelude for the evening was arranged.

At the time appointed, the valet was at his post, and had not to wait long for our hero. Servinal had been duly instructed by his master ; and accordingly, after some conversation containing a number of apparent facts and evidential circumstances which Andrew was to relate, with all proper fidelity, to Mr Vellum, Servinal proposed an adjournment to the play-house, under the tempting pretext, that being acquainted with the door-keepers, he could get them both in free at that

hour. To this our hero could make no possible objection ; on the contrary, he considered his assent to the proposal as in strict conformity to the instructions he had received, to make himself agreeable to so important a client as the valet appeared to be. A coach was thereupon called, and they were speedily at Sandyford-house.

On reaching the precincts of the mansion, Andrew had no reason to doubt that he was approaching one of the principal theatres. The square was thronged with carriages ; a multitude of curious spectators, to see the company as they were set down, occupied the pavement ; and the vestibule was filled with a countless host of servants in livery, the domestics of the guests, and friends of the domestics.

The Earl had instructed Servinal, in order that Andrew might not be exposed to the insolent impertinence of the menials, to take care that it should not be known among them he was not in character ; so that when he entered the hall with his rustic garb and awkward manner, they set him down as Freelove in the character of Jemmy, in the farce of High Life below Stairs, and the sin-

cere astonishment with which he gazed around, excited their unanimous admiration and plaudits as an incomparable performer.

Andrew clung to his companion in a degree of delighted alarm, saying involuntarily, as he was conducted up the grand stair-case to the state-apartments, where the company were assembling, "What a beautiful house this is! Odsake, man, it's as grand as Solomon's Temple."

"Were you ever there?" said a masque in a domino in passing. Andrew instantly recognized a voice that he had heard before, and was petrified. It was the Earl, at whose appearance Ser-vinal immediately withdrew, telling our hero that he was now free to go everywhere, and pick up what amusement he could for the remainder of the evening.

Notwithstanding all the freedom which the belief that he was in a place of public amusement was calculated to inspire, Andrew shyly entered the central saloon, from which the drawing-rooms opened. A party in mask, with the Earl at their head, followed him. He thought, however, they were the players—the hirelings of the entertain-

ment, and expected them to tumble, and perform other antic feats of corporeal ingenuity.

While under this misconception of his situation, just within the door of the saloon, with his back leaning on the pedestal of a statue of Terpsichore, the well-fleshed Countess of Gorbilands, in the character of Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt, came up to him. Her ladyship had not the most remote idea that he was not in character. Being herself a Scotchwoman, she imagined, from his dress, that he had taken the part of a Scottish lad, and addressed him accordingly, imitating the rattle of Lady Rodolpha with considerable humour.

Andrew, however, was disconcerted by what he considered her impudence, and said, "Gang about your business, woman, and no fash me.—I'll hae naething to say to you—I tell you, woman, ye may just whistle on your thumb."

"The brute!" exclaimed the Countess, forgetting her part—"How can he have got into the house? He has no character."

"I'm thinking," said Andrew drily, "that I hae a muckle better character than you."

Her ladyship was amazed, and returned to her party, utterly at a loss to understand the phenomenon.

At this moment, Col. Coleson, in the character of Moll Flaggon, came up, amidst shouts of laughter, exclaiming, "Where is he—where is the gay deceiver?" presenting Andrew at the same moment with her pocket-pistol, *alias* brandy-bottle.

Our hero looked at Moll for about half a minute with the most unequivocal marks of aversion. At last he said, "I wonder how the door-keepers could let sic a tinkler in!"

"Does he disown me?" exclaimed Moll in a rapture of desperation. "Will the perjured wretch cast me off from his tender embraces in the face of the whole world?"—And she began to weep bitterly, wiping her eyes with the corner of her tattered shawl, and taking a sip from her bottle with infinite humour.

"The woman's fou," said Andrew coolly to the bystanders, and walked away somewhat anxiously to shun her.

"See how he deserts me," cried the obstrepe-

rous Moll ; “ he abandons me like the rest of his faithless sex, the cruel gay deceiver ! ”

Andrew, terrified by the vehemence of Moll’s manner, turned back to reason with her, and said, “ Honest woman, ye’re in a mistake.”

The unaffected simplicity of this address was too much even for Coleson, with all his confidence ; and regardless of the proprieties of his part, he joined in the general laughter that it called forth from all present.

Poor Andrew then appealed to the spectators, and assured them, with the most perfect sincerity, that he had never seen the woman before, since he was born. “ She’s just a randy,” said he, “ and ought to be set in the joughs.”

“ What’s the matter—what’s the to do here ? ” cried a Justice Woodcock. “ What are ye after ? Tramp, madam ; and as for you, sir, take yourself off.”

Andrew would have walked away rebuked, but Moll took hold of the seeming magistrate by the coat-tail, exclaiming, “ Is this a proper treatment of the fair sex, Justice Woodcock ? I thought you had been a better man in your day, than to

see a poor innocent girl, that had nothing but her virtue, so wronged by such a cruel, a perfidious, a base and wicked wicked man."

"Poor Molly! and what has he done to you?" said the Justice.

"What has he done!" exclaimed Molly, starting from out her tears. "He has undone me."

Andrew was thunderstruck, and looked around in despair, but saw no friendly visage; in the same moment Moll clasped him in her arms, and pulling out his watch, cried, "This at least will procure me some comfort."—And in putting the watch into her pocket, she took out her bottle, and indulged in another sip.

"Softly, Moll," said Justice Woodcock, "you must give me the watch."

"Oh!" cried Andrew, in a long and vibrating tone of horror; but suddenly mustering courage, he exclaimed, "As sure as death, sir, this is as big a lie as ever Cluty himsel cleckit. Only send for my master, Mr Vellum, and he'll testificate, that I am a poor honest lad, of creditable parentage, just come frae Scotland.—O, what had I to

do here ! Gie me my watch, I tell you—gie me my watch—thieves, thieves !”

The earnest vigour of lungs with which he uttered this exclamation resounded through all the splendid chambers, and the whole music and merriment was in a moment silenced by the alarm. Andrew in the same instant snatched the watch from Moll, who was then in the act of handing it to the Justice, and flying off amidst a universal cataract of laughter, never looked behind till he was out of breath, and safe in the street.

CHAPTER XV.

AN INVITATION.

HASTENING home to his lodgings with the expedition of a delinquent flying from justice, Andrew was undressed, and over head and ears among the bed-clothes, before he made any attempt to rally his scattered senses. In this situation he soon became more composed, and began to think that he had perhaps been subjected to the influence of some delusion. He had heard of Johnny Fa and Lord Cassillis' Lady, and of mountebanks casting glamour in the eyes of their spectators, by which blue-bottle flies, with pins at their tails, are made to appear in the shape of game-cocks, drawing logs of timber; and he was not sure but that some such slight of magic had been practised by the players on himself.

This first effort of returning reason, as his agitation subsided, was succeeded by a still more rational conclusion, no less than that really he did not know where he had been, and therefore it would be as well for him to say nothing of his adventure next morning to the other clerks in the office ; and with this prudent determination, he said his prayers and fell asleep.

But although he had resolved to be silent, he could not divest himself of a certain indescribable feeling of anxiety and apprehension when he went to the desk in the morning. He sat down without saying a word, and wrote on with more than his wonted assiduity, while his companions were recounting to each other their exploits and gallantries, and strong ale debaucheries at the Coal-hole and Finish, after the play.

When Mr Vellum entered the office, the sound of his tread was echoed by the beating of Andrew's heart ; and a sensation of fear, almost as painful as the terrors of suspected guilt, took possession of our hero's whole mind, as that gentleman said to him dryly, " Well, Wylie, did you see Mr Servinal last night ?"

“ A genteel man answered to his name,” replied Andrew, “ and I gave him the letter.”

“ Had you any conversation with him ?” inquired the Solicitor, amused at the dexterity of Andrew’s evasion, and interested by his evident embarrassment.

“ A great deal,” said our hero briskly ; and then he faithfully recounted the whole of what he conceived to be the business part of the conversation.

Vellum commended his attention and memory, and added, “ Did you stop long with him ?”

“ We were not a great while thegither,” replied Andrew with a sigh.

“ I hope he did not detain you long ; for I do not choose that my young men should keep late hours.”

“ It will be my endeavour to satisfy you, sir, in that particular, for I’m no fond of late hours myself ; they are very bad things,” said our hero, morally.

“ Yes,” replied his master ; “ and London is so full of temptations to youth and inexperience.”

“ It’s an awful place,” was the emphatic answer.

“ But you got safe home, after parting from the gentleman,” said Mr Vellum.

“ Ay,” replied Andrew with a nod, as if he spoke inwardly ; “ ay, I got safe home.”

The Solicitor could, with difficulty, keep his gravity ; but after a momentary pause, he looked sharply at our hero, and then, in a jocular tone, said, “ I suspect, Wylie, you were engaged in some adventure last night.”

“ I fancy every body may meet wi’ as meikle, and do nae wrang either,” was the answer to this home question.

“ Then you did meet with something ?” said his master.

“ I canna, without a lie, say I met wi’ naething.”

“ But what was it ?” inquired the Solicitor, with an affected tone of impatience.

“ I’m sure, sir, that’s no an easy question to answer ; for ye ken I’m but a new come stranger in London, and a’s no ill that’s ill like.”

“ Then I presume that what you met with was something you thought strange ?”

“ I dare say,” replied Andrew, “ it may no be strange here.”

“ It is very extraordinary that you refuse to tell me what it was.”

“ Me refuse, sir !” exclaimed Andrew ; “ I’m sure I never refused.”

“ Then why don’t you satisfy me ?”

“ It’s baith my earnest wish and interest, sir, to gie you the fullest satisfaction in my power,” replied our hero ; and he looked at his master with such an air of simplicity, that Vellum was utterly at a loss whether to set him down as a knave or a fool. At this moment one of Lord Sandyford’s servants entered, with a card from his Lordship, requesting Mr Wylie’s company to dinner that day. Andrew was petrified—he grew as pale as ashes, and trembled from head to foot, totally incapable of comprehending the mystery of this device. Vellum smiled, and said, “ I hope you are not engaged, and that you can oblige his Lordship.”

“ O, am sure,” cried our hero, panting, “ I’ll do ony thing in the world to oblige my Lord.”

The footman was accordingly dismissed with a card to the Earl, accepting of the invitation. "You are a fortunate youth," said Mr Vellum, "to have made so early such an enviable acquaintance."

"But, sir," interrupted Andrew, "what will I do, for I hae nae claes fit for my Lord's company?"

"Take my advice," said his master gravely, and with sincerity, "make no change in your appearance, but only be careful that you are particularly clean and neat."

Mr Vellum was more in the secret of his adventure the preceding evening than he pretended. In fact, the Solicitor had been himself at the masquerade, and partook of the merriment which "the incomparable unknown" occasioned, as *The Morning Post* called Andrew, in describing the entertainment, for the purpose of advertising the savoury merits of the cook and confectioner who provided the supper.

In resuming his duty at the desk, Andrew marvelled, as he copied, on the singularity of having received an invitation to dine with an Earl; and

he was shrewd enough to guess that it could neither be on account of his learning, his rank, nor the fashion of his appearance.

The invitation which Andrew had received from the Earl was soon known among the other clerks, and their first notion led them to fancy that he was related to his Lordship; they began, in consequence, to think he was not, after all, the mean sort of half-witted creature which they had hitherto thought him, but an eccentric and original character. This idea received something like confirmation, when one of them, inquiring in what degree of relationship he stood with the Earl, Andrew dryly replied, "Really I canna say, but I believe we're sprung of the same stock."—Some of the more knowing, however, began to suspect that it possibly might be on account of his odd and singular appearance; and that his Lordship, in conferring the honour of the invitation, slyly intended to amuse his own friends, by showing off the curiosity;—a shrewd suspicion, characteristic of that precocious knowledge of the world, which is one of the chief, if not the very chief itself, of all

the peculiarities of the metropolitan youth, especially of that sharp and pert tribe of them, who, like the imps that infest the road leading to Paradise, chatter, frisk, and flutter in the avenues to the tribunals of justice.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DINNER PARTY.

ANDREW having provided himself with the address of Sandyford-House, was at the door as punctually as the clock went the hour. The knocker, at that moment, seemed to him too ponderous for his hands to raise, and after pausing for about half-a-minute to recover courage, he tapped with his knuckle, to announce his claim for admission. The porter, a saucy corpulent fellow, opened, and demanded what he wanted. "I am come to get my dinner with my Lord," was the reply. The corner of John Swell's lips crooked of their own accord downward, into an expression of ineffable contempt and exclusion, when, fortunately, the footman who had carried the invitation to Vellum's, happened to come into the

hall, and, recognizing our hero, conducted him up stairs to the drawing-room, where the other guests, with the Earl and Countess, were waiting, in expectation of his approach.

Andrew was agitated and confused ; but, in ascending the stairs, he recovered sufficient presence of mind to enable him to observe that the house was the same, which, on the preceding night, he had believed was one of the theatres ; and the idea suddenly flashed upon him, that he owed the honour of the invitation to the simplicity of his Scottish manners and appearance. The servant who shewed him the way, had observed his confusion, and when Andrew paused, as this notion came across his mind, he conceived him to be overwhelmed with diffidence, and stopped also, with a sneer, being aware of the motives which had induced his master to invite him to dinner. But a moment's reflection set all things right with our hero, and he seemed, to the saucy valet, to undergo a marvellous transmutation, from an awkward vulgar boy, into an easy and confident gentleman. He advanced towards the door of the drawing-room with as light a step, and as cheerful a coun-

tenance, as he ever approached the cottage of his school-master with the chat and jokes of the village, and was ushered into the splendid company without feeling the slightest embarrassment; on the contrary, he went forward in that agreeable state of self-possession, which a man feels when he knows it is in his power to dispense pleasure. Lord Sandyford, who possessed an acute perception of the latent powers of character, perceived, by the change, on the instant he threw his eyes on him as the door opened, that he was not the entire simple oddity which he had at first imagined, and immediately went towards him, and shook him by the hand, in a manner that raised him at once, as it were, into the equality and footing of a friend.

“Mr Wylie,” said his Lordship, “I ought to apologise for the freedom which I have taken with you.”

“Say nae mair about it, my Lord,” interrupted Andrew; “I maun pay for my experience of the world as weel as my betters; but it was an awfu’ thing though.”

This simple reply was received as original hu-

mour, and much amused the high-bred assemblage, both by its gusto and familiarity. Sir Timothy Knicketty, the connoisseur, who was of the party, declared it was truly *a la Teniers*.

When they had descended to the dining-room, the ladies were particularly anxious to share our hero among them; but he put an end to the controversy, by taking the seat of honour between the Duchess of Dashingwell and the Countess, who, independent of their rank, were the two finest women in the room. Her grace was a blithe, open-tempered character, that could carry a joke as great a length as any lady of her class.

During dinner, nothing for some time particularly occurred. Andrew, with a quick and cunning eye, observed the etiquettes of the table, as they were performed by others, and acquitted himself without committing any extraordinary breach of the wonted ceremonials; in this respect, he was indeed superior to many a scion of nobility, from Eton or Oxford. The Duchess of D. led him on in conversation, and he said a number of droll and naif things, which were received as bon mots of the most racy flavour. Peals of

laughter bore testimony to all the house with what success he sustained his character, and as the wine mounted his confidence rose. Before the end of the second course he was in high glee, and perfectly at his ease ; insomuch, that the very servants in attendance could with difficulty maintain the requisite taciturn decorum of their office. But all restraint of duty, place, and circumstance, were in the end overwhelmed, when, in reply to an invitation from her Grace, to take wine with her, he exclaimed, “ Na, leddies, if ye gar me drink at this rate, the wine will be running in my head, and I’ll be kittling you till ye keckle or a’s done ; so look to the consequences.”

Lord Sandyford enjoyed the scene with a relish to which he had long been a stranger ; but the Countess was the least affected of the whole party by the simplicity or the art of Andrew. Her Ladyship, however, maintained throughout the evening a graceful propriety, that admirably became her station. She seldom condescended to laugh ; still, at times, a pleasant, ringing, cheerful sound came from her heart, that shewed she could enjoy the pleasantries of life as jocundly as her

neighbours. On these occasions, her lord would look at her, as if startled by some unexpected note of pleasure, but in a moment her hilarity was suppressed, and she was as cold and formal as before.

The evening's entertainment had, however, generally the effect of inspiring the Earl with a grateful feeling towards Andrew ; for it is one of the blessed consequences of hearty laughter, to stir into action all the kindly humours of the mind ; and his Lordship determined to have him for his frequent guest. The rest of the company, particularly the Duchess of D., was scarcely less delighted with his eccentricities ; and when, after returning to the drawing-room, she persuaded him to sing, he fairly won her heart, and was chosen a regular invitant to all her parties for the winter. Indeed, to do him justice, in the choice of his song he displayed equal taste and judgment, and the execution was worthy of the choice. His song was that ludicrous enumeration of goods and chattels, beginning with " My father wi' his deeing breath," in the performance of which, flushed with the Tuscan, he addressed himself so eagerly to her Grace, snapping his fingers with exulta-

tion, and nodding and winking, that she was obliged to throw herself on a sofa, holding both her sides, exclaiming, "For the love of Heaven, stop him—stop him, or I shall die!"

The sagacity with which Andrew had thus improved the first impression of his peculiarities, taught him instinctively to choose that happy moment for taking leave, when the effect he had produced was liveliest. At the end of his song he accordingly sprang away, as if he had suddenly recollected himself, crying, "Megsty me, what am I about, daffing till this time here, when I hae got a codicil to copy to a dying man's last will and testament!" And with that, giving a ludicrous nod for a bow, he ran down stairs, and hastened home.

CHAPTER XVII.

BORROWING.

THE first winter thus passed with our hero in a manner that most young men would have deemed enviable, and the prudent regarded as fraught with danger to his future fortune ; but his simplicity remained invincible to the blandishments of pleasure, and the sterling worth of his innate character raised him more and more in the estimation of Lord Sandyford.

One morning, on going to chambers, he found Mr Vellum thoughtful and vexed. He had been, on the preceding evening, engaged with money-lenders, relative to an additional mortgage, which was immediately required for the Earl, and the negociation had not been satisfactory. The money was obtained ; but on such terms, that he was almost afraid to communicate them to his Lordship,—not that he had any rea-

son, from his experience of the Earl's disposition and temper, to apprehend that his Lordship would trouble himself for a moment on the subject ; but he felt as a man of business, that he had not been so happy in his management as on other similar occasions.

After sitting some time, turning over the memoranda of the transaction, and casting about in his thoughts for what he should say to the Earl, he happened to look towards the desk where Andrew was earnestly employed at his vocation, his little round smooth-hair'd head following his pen as if it was slowly rolling on the paper ; and it occurred to him, that perhaps no fitter envoy could be employed in the business than the droll and uncouth oddity before him. From what had already taken place between him and the Earl, the humour and peculiarities of Andrew seemed likely to render the communication less disagreeable to his Lordship, than his own dry and regular method of explaining the circumstances, and he summoned him at once from the desk.

“ You must go, Wylie,” said he, “ to Lord Sandyford with these papers. They contain some

matters respecting the loan of twenty thousand pounds that I have procured for his Lordship."

"Twenty thousand pounds!—barro't money!" exclaimed Andrew. But his master, without noticing the exclamation, continued—"And you will tell him, that it really could not be obtained on better terms; that, in fact, at present every thing in the city is drained by an instalment of the government loan; and money can only be raised with the utmost difficulty, and on terms I am almost ashamed to state."

"I wish—I wish," said Andrew, "that my Lord may haud thegither twenty thousand pounds a' at ance; and wasting baith at heck and manger, wi' bardie leddies and whirligig fool-fellows at yon gait."

Vellum was folding up the papers while our hero made this observation; and a little relieved from his anxiety by having selected him for his minister, said jocularly, "You may as well give his Lordship a word of advice on the subject, Wylie, if you find him in the humour."

"Atweel I'll no grudge to do that," replied Andrew seriously; "for he's a fine man, and his

leddy a most discreet woman—only a wee thought o'er muckle ta'en up wi' hersel. It's a pity that my Lord and her dinna draw thegither so weel as could be wished."

Vellum was startled by this remark, and looking earnestly and inquisitively at Andrew, said, "Have you heard anything about them?"

"Me hear about them!—What could I hear about them? I ken nobody that's acquaint wi' ony o' them save yoursel; but I have twa holes in my head, and as many windows, and I can hearken at the ane, and keek out at the ither, and learn what's gaun on in the warld, just as weel as ither folk.—My Leddy, Mr Vellum, is mair weel bred in the parley-voo style to her gudeman, than a kindly wife should be, and my Lord fashes at her formality."

"You are a strange creature, or I am mistaken," said Vellum, as he handed him the papers; "and I hope you will not blunder in this business."

Andrew, as he received them, assured his master, that he might depend he would do his best endeavours both to give him and the Earl satis-

faction ; and, taking his hat, hastened to Sandyford-house, where he was immediately admitted.

“ What ! Wylie, are you sent ? ” cried his Lordship, somewhat surprised when our hero entered.

“ For lack o’ a better hand, my Lord, the master bade me tak thir papers to your Lordship, and to tell you, that he was vera sorry he couldna get the siller on any thing like Christian terms at this time.”

His Lordship smiled, saying, “ I thought he knew that I never expected it on anything like Christian terms.”

“ It’s a great soom, my Lord,” resumed Andrew, looking at the Earl from under his brows ; “ and maun hae ta’en a hantle o’ gathering and gripping to make it up ; and it’s a sair pity that it winna last lang wi’ your Lordship.”

The Earl, at this address, laid the papers on the table, and begged Andrew to be seated.

“ What were you observing, Mr Wylie, about the money ? ” said his Lordship, when Andrew had seated himself aloof from the table.

“ I was just saying, sir, my Lord, that twenty thousand pounds is a dreadful soom of money.

It's a thousand pounds a-year, my Lord, at merchant's rate, o' dead loss."

"It is so, Wylie; but what then?"

"Nae, as to the what then o' the business," cried Andrew, in some degree lightened in his spirit, "that's your Lordship's look out. But I canna bear to see an honest gentleman riding helter skelter straight on to a broken brig, and no gie him warning."

"This is at least something new," said the Earl to himself, a little interested, and with a kindly excitement of sensibility towards his friend; and he then added, "I am certainly obliged to you, Wylie."

"Ye're nane obligated to me," cried Andrew; "it's the part o' honesty to let you ken the road ye're in; but, as Burns says to the de'il, 'O would ye tak a thought and men', for really, my Lord, I'm wae for you—a man o' your degree can neither work nor want, and what will become o' you when a's gane to a'? I'll tell you what it is, my Lord, before I would be hinging ae millstone about my neck after anither in this gait, I would take a rung, and thrash every ane o' your het and

fu' flunkies out o' the house—Devil do me gude o' them—and o' the other clanjamphrey, that are eating you out of house and hall, but I would let them ken what twenty thousand pounds are in as many paiks. Sir, my Lord, if ye'll believe me, there was no ae single ane, o' a' that fool antic mob of latherons and merry-andrews, devouring the mains more here the ither night wi' their galanting, that would gie your Lordship a bawbie for auld lang syne, if ye were seeking your meat frae door to door, in a cauld winter's day, wi' the drap at your neb, and the tear in your ee, and no ae handfu', no even a cauld potatoe, in your meal-pock."

"The picture is strong," said the Earl emphatically; "but it is not without some true portraiture. What would you advise me to do?"

"It would be out of a' bounds o' discretion for me to advise your Lordship," replied our hero. "I'm only speaking o' what I would do mysel; but then I'm neither a lord nor a married man."

"Yes, Wylie, yes; you are right. The lord and the married man are two serious considerations," said the Earl, a little pensively.

“ Ane of them,” cried Andrew briskly, “ is bad enough ; but the twa make a case that would puzzle Solomon himsel. Howsomever, sir, my Lord, I can tell you ae thing, and that is, redde the ravelled skein wi’ my Leddy, and aiblins baith you and her will can spare some o’ the cost and outlay that ye’re at for living furniture, the eating dishes and drinking decanters that o’er often garnish your table.”

The Earl’s colour went and came during this speech ; his eyes, at the freedom of the allusion to Lady Sandyford, flashed with indignation, but it was only for a moment. When Andrew paused, his countenance was settled, and he said in an easy tone, “ You have, I think, Wylie, but a poor opinion of my guests.”

“ The folk are weel enough ; but as your Lordship cares sae little about them, I wonder how ye can be fashed wi’ sic like.”

“ How do you know that I care little about them ?” said the Earl, half amused, but surprised at the remark.

“ As the auld sang sings,” said Andrew,

“ ‘ Them that gant
Something want,
Sleep, meat, or making o’.’ ”

And ye’ll excuse my freedom, sir, my Lord, but I have seen, mair than once or twice, that your Lordship was no in a vera satisfied situation, notwithstanding the merriment and daffing around you.”

“ How ? ” cried the Earl, and bit his lips. “ But, Wylie, what makes you suppose that there is what you call a ravelled skein between me and Lady Sandyford.”

The jocular tone in which his Lordship uttered this sentence, was calculated to throw Andrew off his guard ; but it produced no change in the earnest simplicity with which he was endeavouring to fulfil the orders he had received from his master, with respect to recommending economy to the Earl.

“ I meant no offence,” replied Andrew respectfully ; “ but I thought the best way for your Lordship to begin to retrench, would be by trying

to do with as little company as possible ; and if my Leddy might be brought to the same way of thinking, it would be a blithe thing for you baith."

Andrew paused, for he observed a cloud passing over the Earl's expressive countenance, and a mutual silence for some time ensued ; during which, his Lordship rose and walked towards the window. Our hero also left his chair, and was standing on the floor to make his bow of leave, when the Earl turned round. " Wylie," said his Lordship playfully, " can you speak of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hysop that springeth out of the wall ?"

" It's no right o' your Lordship," replied Andrew seriously, " to make a fool o' the Bible by likening me to King Solomon, the wisest man that ever was in the world ; so I wish your Lordship a vera good morning. But hae ye ony thing to say to Mr Vellum anent the twenty thousand pounds ?"

" What can I have to say ?—I wanted the money—he has got it—and I doubt not has made the best bargain in his power ; so take back the papers, and tell him to prepare the deeds."

“ Sir, my Lord,” cried Andrew, petrified, “ ye hae never lookit at the papers.”

The Earl smiled, and stepping towards the table, gathered them up and counted them ; he then placed them in Andrew’s hands, and said, “ I have looked quite as much at them as I wish to do.”

Andrew shook his head as he received the papers, and for a moment looked compassionately at the Earl. There was something in the motion and the look that produced an electrical vibration at the heart of his Lordship, and as our hero moved towards the door and retired, he followed him with his eye ; and even after the door was closed, still he continued for several minutes to gaze in that direction.

“ I have hitherto lived among machines,” said the Earl, in soliloquy, moving from the spot, and throwing himself carelessly on a sofa ; “ but this is a human being ; it has brains, in which thought rises naturally as water wells from the ground, the wholesome element of temperance ; it has a heart too ; and in this little discourse has shewn more of man than all the bearded bipeds I have ever met with. What am I to him, that he should take

such brotherly interest in my desolation ? and how should he know that it is caused by my wife ? My wife !—What wife ?—I have no wife ; scarcely so much of one as Othello had when he had slain the gentle Desdemona.” And in saying these words, his Lordship rolled his head over towards the back of the sofa, and covering his face with his handkerchief, lay seemingly asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN ACCIDENT.

THE Earl of Sandyford was an only child. In his fifth year, he had succeeded to the family honours and estates. The Countess, his mother, was one of those kind of respectable ladies, who, at their exit from the stage of life, are declared, in the obituary of the newspapers, to have been of the nature of pearls and precious stones—ornaments to their sex. Her husband bequeathed to her the principal direction of his son's education. The young Lord was the last of his immediate line, and, in the event of dying without issue, the estates and titles devolved on the remote descendant of some collateral ancestor. The Dowager felt it no less her duty, on this account, to cultivate his affections for the domestic virtues,

in order that he might be early induced to form a suitable matrimonial connexion, than to provide all the proper and requisite means for the development of his talents and the formation of a character, which, she was persuaded, would reflect lustre on his country.

With this view, his education was entirely domestic ; but conducted by masters eminently qualified, till he reached his sixteenth year, when he was sent to college. The Countess, at the same time, assiduously preserved an old intimacy with the Avonside family, the daughters of which promised to excel their mother, who had been one of the most celebrated beauties of her day, and whose many amiable qualities were far dearer in the recollection of her friends, than the charms of her person, or the graces of her manners. She died while her children were all young ; but in the Marquis, their father, it was thought they had a wise and excellent protector. Unfortunately, however, after her death, he devoted himself, as he said, entirely to public business, and left them in the hands of hired instructors, who were only an-

xious that they should be distinguished for the elegance of their external acquirements.

In the course of this intimacy, the Countess had, in due time, the satisfaction to observe that Lady Augusta, the eldest, began to interest the youthful admiration of her son ; and it soon became an understood thing, among the respective friends of the two families, that, when his Lordship came of age, a marriage would in all probability take place.

We shall not dwell on intervening circumstances ; Lord Sandyford at college was allowed to possess talents of a very high order. The most sanguine expectations were formed of him by his acquaintance ; but some of them differed as to the department in which he was likely to excel. The ambitious, who judged of him by his occasional animation, predicted that he would exalt the political renown of his country ; but those who most esteemed the milder movements of his character, cherished the hope, that his genius would add to her more permanent glory in the quiet pursuits of a literary life. Both parties were equally disappointed.

Lady Augusta Spangle was in many respects the reflex of her accomplished lover. She was not only endowed with great beauty, but an education, conducted with admirable skill to bring out all the showy portions of her character in their fairest forms and liveliest colours, had adorned her with many elegancies, almost as fascinating as that charming simplicity with which Nature delights to set at defiance the graceful endeavours of art. She was not witty, nor did she possess any of that sunniness of mind, which beams out in the smiles of good humour ; but her apothegms had often the force of wisdom, and sometimes the brilliancy as well as the barb of satire. It was impossible to see her without admiration ; but there was a systematical decorum in her deportment, which diminished the delight that her singular beauty was naturally calculated to inspire.

She had, in fact, been educated for the market of fashion, and deluded by the sordid maxims of Mrs Harridan, to whom the care of her youth had been unfortunately entrusted, she believed that the main object in the life of a young woman of rank, is to obtain an establishment beco-

ming the dignity of her family. "Men," as that antiquated artificer of manners would often say to her pupils, "are all either mercenary or capricious; and the daughter of a duke, if she is not rich, and few of them are so, has no chance of marrying according to her condition, unless she render herself interesting to the vanity of such noblemen as can afford to indulge their fancies in the choice of a wife." Lady Augusta gave credit to her precepts, and was their victim.

It might have been thought, considering how soon it had been determined that Lady Augusta was destined to be the bride of Lord Sandyford, that Mrs Harridan would have relaxed in her efforts to form an artificial character, which, if she had possessed any true judgment of the world, she must have perceived could not fail in the end to excite the aversion of the Earl; but her system was neither to make homes happy nor wives amiable. She had an interest of her own to serve; and actuated by the same mercenary motives as the music-masters whom she employed, was only solicitous about the effect which her pupils might produce on their appearance in society. The

eclat of a splendid general deportment she knew would redound to her own advantage; and for this she neglected to cultivate those gentler graces which constitute the true strength of female dominion.

One thing, however, resulted from her system; but perhaps it depended more on the effect of individual feeling, than as a necessary consequence of the plated virtues which she so assiduously polished. The desire to obtain approbation quickened the sense of shame, and gave it even a morbid acuteness. To this feeling Lady Augusta was nervously alive; and where there is shame, there may yet be virtue.

The day after Lord Sandyford came of age, the marriage was celebrated; but before the honey-moon had half waned, it was evident to the most cursory visitor, that his Lordship had imbibed some secret cause of distaste against his beautiful bride. By the end of the third month, to the amazement of all the world, he was wildly running the career of dissipation.

The Dowager, his mother, was broken-hearted by this unexpected result, and her distress was

consoled in the usual manner by a number of sympathizing friends, not all females, who, in their malicious consolation, often remarked, that, after all, sooner or later, men will indemnify themselves for the restraints laid upon their youth; and that the good old way of letting young fellows sow their wild oats was evidently the best, as it was doubtless the result of practical wisdom and experience. "We therefore," said these honourable personages, "do not despair yet of seeing Lord Sandysford pull up, and turn out a very shining character." Nothing, however, was farther from the charity of their hopes; and several years passed away, without any thing arising to make them doubt that his ruin was irretrievable.

In the meantime, no apparent change had taken place in the elegant deportment of the Countess. She was still radiant with beauty, and the splendour of her accomplishments was acknowledged through all the constellations of fashion. Her prudence also received its due share of commendation; for, notwithstanding the enigmatical career of her lord, she still preserved with him the conjugal decorum of living under the same roof.

But, except on those occasions, when it was necessary to exhibit the plate and hospitality of the family, they seldom met ; still maintaining, however, towards the world that well-bred reciprocity of civility, which justified their acquaintance in asking them to the same parties on the same card.

One night, as her Ladyship was returning home from the Opera, her carriage, in crossing from Piccadilly into Berkley-Street, ran against a gentleman who happened to be passing at the moment, and seriously hurt him. The stranger was Mr Ferrers, one of the most eccentric orbs then above the horizon of fashion. This gentleman, in his youth, was ardent and generous, quick in his resentments, easily offended, and frank in his pardons ; but there was a versatility of humour about him, which prevented him from making friends, and as he advanced in life, the career which he ran tended to impair his best qualities. The succession of anxieties which he suffered from the turf and the hazard-table, excited a false appetite for acute sensations, and all pleasures seemed to him vapid that were not flavoured with a mixture of appre-

hension, and even of danger. His losses sharpened his feelings, and his success was a spur to his infatuation. This distempered state of excitement had, at the period of which we are speaking, attained a degree of frenzy ; and although in manners the unhappy man conducted himself like the generality of the circle in which he moved, he was already touched with madness. His insanity, however, had not manifested itself in any instance of remarkable extravagance ; but the currents of his mind and thoughts were troubled and impetuous, and frequently tempestuous gusts, and whirlwinds of rage and passion, urged him with a headlong rashness in his pursuits, whatever they happened to be ; as often, however, as he attained possession of his object, the paroxysm immediately subsided, and he paused, as it were, and looked round, as if he stood wondering at what could have instigated him into such precipitation and violence.

During the period that he was confined to his room by the accident, Lady Sandyford, with whom he had no previous acquaintance, frequently sent to inquire for him ; and the effect of this natural, indeed under the circumstances, indispensable po-

liteness, inspired him with a frenetic enthusiasm of gratitude towards her Ladyship; insomuch, that when he was in a condition to mix again in society, he sought her out in all places with an impassioned zeal that belonged alike to his mental infirmity and his character; and he was so open and singular in this, that he soon attracted the eyes of the world towards him.

The Countess was a neglected wife; but such had been the pride of her carriage, that no man had ever ventured to address her with one improper expression; and such the sustained dignity of her deportment, that no circumstance had yet occurred to require the slightest exertion of the latent powers of her own mind. She was, however, struck at last with the assiduities of Ferrers; and having a distinct perception of the shattered state of his understanding, instead of repelling or rebuking his pertinacity, she stooped, if the term may be allowed, with a compassionate condescension, which, contrasted with her usual cool and collected demeanour, begot surmises prejudicial to her honour. These, for a time, were only to be met with,

like rare coins that serve for counters, at the select whist-tables of the Fates of reputation ; but at last they got into general circulation among the small change of scandal at the club-houses.

CHAPTER XIX.

A PARAGRAPH.

ON the morning preceding one of Lady Sand-
ford's grand winter parties, as the Earl was sitting
alone in the library, after he had just finished his
breakfast, and thrown himself back in his chair,
with his feet on the fender, nursing such aimless
fancies as float in the haze of an imagination cloud-
ed by ennui, an incident occurred which precipi-
tated the crisis of his conjugal disease. It was
the custom of the servants in the hall to dry the
wet newspapers with a smoothing iron, which not
only did the business expeditiously, but gave them
the lustre of the hot-press. It was also as regu-
larly their custom to inform themselves of what
was going on in the world, before taking in the pa-
pers to their master and mistress. By this, a pa-

paragraph that pretty plainly accused the Countess of infidelity was discovered. In order to preserve peace in the house, it was suggested by one of the footmen that it would be as well to burn it out, as if by accident, with the smoothing iron. This was done, and the paper carried in to his Lordship.

In this obliterating operation a portion, however, of the parliamentary proceedings was destroyed; and little interest as the Earl took in them, or indeed in any earthly concernment, he could not endure a disappointment; the bell, in consequence, was rung sharply, and another copy of the paper forthwith ordered.

The tone in which this command was delivered alarmed the servant who received it, and he communicated his opinion to his companions, that their master had certainly, notwithstanding their contrivance, made out some of the defaced paragraph, and therefore it would be as good as their places were worth, to equivocate any more in such circumstances; another paper was accordingly procured, and presented to his Lordship.

There was an air of embarrassment in the appearance of the footman who carried it in, which

struck the keen eye of his master. He seemed to hesitate as he laid it on the table, and to linger in the room ; insomuch, that the Earl ordered him to retire.

The interest which had been excited in reading the parliamentary debate had, during this little interruption, subsided. Instead of turning to it again, his Lordship carelessly allowed his eyes to wander over the small talk in the fashionable department ; and the first paragraph that caught his attention was the one which alluded to the infidelities of Lady Sandyford.

He read it twice over emphatically—he rose from his seat, and walked to the window—he then returned, and read it again. Happening to glance over the page, he saw that it was exactly on the back of the passage in the debate which had been burnt out. “ These rascals,” he exclaimed, “ are acquainted with the guilt of their mistress, and it was no accident that occasioned the burning of the other paper.”

His first movement was to call in the servants and question them on the subject ; but in the same moment he reflected on his own carelessness as a

husband, and withdrew his hand as it was stretched towards the bell-pull—mortified with himself that the sense of honour should make him hesitate to vindicate his conjugal rights. In this crisis the Countess entered, and his Lordship rising abruptly, moved towards the door, as if he had resolved not to speak to her ; but before turning the bolt, he paused and said, with an agitated voice, pointing to the newspaper, “ Your Ladyship will find an interesting paragraph among the scandalous inuendos of the day ;” and in saying these words, he hurried out of the room.

The Countess hastily seized the newspaper, and on looking at the paragraph, suffered an inexpressible feeling of humiliation ; her pride was laid prostrate, and she sat for several minutes in a state of stupefaction ; for she was conscious of never having been guilty of any levity, and had taken no small merit to herself for the dignity with which she had endured, at first, the spleen, and subsequently the negligence, of her lord. In the course, however, of a few minutes, she recovered her self-possession, and ringing the bell, directed cards to be instantly issued, to inform her friends that her

assembly for that night was deferred. With equal decision she at the same time ordered the carriage, and drove to Mrs Harridan's, for the purpose of taking her advice.

On reaching the residence of that lady, she was at once admitted by the servants ; but on entering the room where their mistress was sitting, she perceived by the cool ceremony of her reception, that Mrs Harridan was already acquainted with the fatal paragraph ; a short preface, in consequence, served to introduce the object of her visit.

“ I hope,” said Mrs Harridan calmly, “ that there is no real foundation for this slander ; but, at all events, my dear Lady Sandycroft, it is not an affair in which I can with any propriety interfere. Besides, now that things are so public, it would be highly improper in me, considering my situation, with so many young ladies of rank under my care, to be at all seen in the business. Surely you have other friends, more experienced in such sort of misfortunes, to whom you can apply with more advantage.”

The Countess looked at her with surprise and indignation, exclaiming, “ You speak as if I were

guilty ! You throw me from you as if I brought infection with me !”

“ Far be it from me,” said Mrs Harridan, in the same quiet polite tone, “ to suppose any such thing ; but I am much too insignificant a person to take the reputation of the Countess of Sandyford under my protection.”

“ I thought,” cried her Ladyship, almost bursting into tears, “ that I might, in any distress, have applied to you as to a mother.”

“ I trust,” replied Mrs Harridan, “ that when your Ladyship was under my charge, you always found me such, and your conduct then was certainly irreproachable ; but I cannot be responsible for the behaviour of ladies after they have entered the world. In a word, should the result of this unfortunate business prove prejudicial to your Ladyship, it will not be the first instance of the kind that has confirmed me in the prudence of a rule I have long laid down, never to interfere in the concerns of my pupils after they have once left my house. I shall rejoice if your Ladyship is acquitted of the imputation, but I cannot put to hazard the character of my establishment ; and it is there-

fore with profound pain I feel myself constrained to put an end to our intercourse.”

The Countess was thunderstruck. She had never before been addressed in the plain language of a business-mind, sordidly considering its own interests, and pursuing them in contempt of all the sympathies and charities of social life. She rose from her seat, but trembled so much, that, unable to stand, she sunk back in the chair, and gave way to her tears. Her spirits, however, soon rallied, and wiping her eyes, she returned abruptly to her carriage, and drove directly home, where she dispatched a messenger for the Marquis of Avonside, her father.

CHAPTER XX.

AN EXPLANATION.

THE Earl, on leaving the Countess, walked into the square, with the intention of going down to St James's-Street; but for the first time in his life he felt that indescribable embarrassment which is so often mistaken for shame. He shrunk at the idea of meeting the eyes of his acquaintance, conscious that they must have already seen the paragraph, and could not determine how he ought to act in circumstances so painful and unexpected. In the hesitation which these reflections caused, he happened to recollect that Mordaunt, a college companion, whom he had not seen for several years, had left his card for him the day before, and he instantly resolved to go to his lodgings, and consult him on the subject. Accordingly, instead of

walking down Bond-Street, he crossed into Hanover-Square, and by the back of St George's Church, went through the narrow passage leading into Saville-Row; thus avoiding the great thorough-fares in his way to Sackville-Street, where his friend lodged.

On reaching the house, and being informed that he was at home, he walked up stairs, unannounced, to the first floor. His appearance would have been a sufficient warrant for this liberty to the servant who opened the door, even had his person not been almost universally known throughout the three fashionable parishes, and especially in the vicinity of St James's Street. For, notwithstanding the dexterity and effect of dress and address in the adventurous knights of the order of expedients, there is still an habitual and obvious source of superiority about the unquestioned gentleman, which all the various degrees of public servants intuitively recognize, and none more quickly than the landladies and domestics of lodging-houses, even though the stranger should be fresh from the country, and in the newest gloss of a suit made on purpose for

the journey to London, by some worshipful dignitary in the corporation of the borough nearest his estate.

His Lordship, on reaching the landing-place, flung the drawing-room door carelessly open. Mordaunt at the moment was writing, and being disturbed by the nonchalance of this intrusion, raised his eyes hastily, and did not at the first glance recognize, in the pale attenuated elegance of the man of fashion, the once vigorous and handsome rival of his boldest exercises. In an instant, however, he discovered who he was, and starting from his seat, took the Earl warmly by the hands. His Lordship endured the heartiness of the double shake for a few seconds with evident pleasure, but ashamed to shew the sensibility that he felt, he abruptly pulled his hands away, and shook his fingers, as if they were tingling with the squeeze, saying, "I wish the gods had given you dryads and fauns hoofs for hands; you have positively bruised my fingers to jelly."

The manner in which this was said, had a cadence of affectation in it, which struck disagreeably on the ear of Mordaunt, and he looked for a

moment at the delicate complexion and elegant emaciation of his friend, with a strong feeling of disappointment and compassion ; but his kinder disposition returned upon him, and he exclaimed, “ Heavens ! Sandyford, what an altered being ! ”

His Lordship, with a drolling coolness, in the same moment examined Mordaunt curiously from head to foot, and with burlesque gravity, said, “ These muscles are the growth of nocturnal rest, that hue is gathered from the morning sun, and that strength from many a stubble field and mile of hill and dale.—Upon my honour, Mordaunt, you are the most perfect personification of the blessings of a country life I have ever seen—absolutely a rural allegory—Apollo fresh from the flocks of Peneus.”—He then paused in his railery, and taking Mordaunt, with the sincerity of their old friendship, by the hand, added, “ I cannot express how delighted I am to see you, and to see you thus.”

“ And you thus, Sandyford,” replied Mordaunt, recollecting the bright expectations which had once been cherished of his friend.

“ I am indeed not surprised that you should be somewhat disconcerted, for I believe that I am a little spectrish ; and it is certain that I have been long thought no more,” said his Lordship.

There was a degree of sensibility in the manner in which the latter part of this sentence was expressed, that vibrated to the generous heart of Mordaunt. and, without answering, he drew the Earl to a seat, and resumed his own chair at the table.

“ But,” said his Lordship gaily, “ these things must not be thought of in these ways. What may the business be that has brought you to town, from the peaceful shades, and the innocence of the groves ?”

Mordaunt, equally desirous to change the conversation, which he saw troubled his Lordship, said, “ Matrimony.”

“ You are indeed a bold fellow, to venture on a town-bred wife,” cried the Earl ; “ I really thought that the simple race of the swains had been extinct ; particularly, as the poets have of late given them up, almost even in the way of rhyme. But you surprise me,—who is the Chloe,

that with ears more used to the sound of bells and the rattling of wheels, than to the singing of birds or of falling waters, has captivated the gentle Damon?"

"Matters are not quite so pastoral with us as that," replied Mordaunt. "The nymph is an old acquaintance of your own, Julia Beauchamp."

"The beautiful Julia!" exclaimed his Lordship, with unaffected emotion, recollecting that he had not seen her since his own ill-fated marriage; but he suppressed the remembrance, and said with animation, "The faithful loves then do still reside among the sylvan bowers."—But this play of fancy memory again interrupted, and presented the image of Lady Sandyford, in that glowing beauty which had first charmed his youthful affections, when he beheld her in the graces of her virgin years, bounding like the fawn amidst the stately groves that surround the venerable magnificence of her ancestral home,—contrasted with the condition into which she had fallen, and he suddenly paused, and remained some time silent.

“ You are indisposed, Sandyford,—what is the matter ?” said Mordaunt anxiously.

“ I am only thinking,” replied his Lordship, “ that there cannot be a fitter moment for communicating some notion of the comforts of matrimony, than when a man is on the verge of the precipice—Pshaw !—I must speak out—You are here, Mordaunt, at that moment of all my life in which I stand most in need of a friend—a friend such as you are.—Have you heard any thing about Lady Sandyford ?”

“ My Lord !” cried Mordaunt, in extreme astonishment.

“ The lapse of the Countess,” continued his Lordship, “ affects me little ; but, according to the maxims of that old rascal, the World, the business has become so public, that I must interfere. Nothing is bad in London, so long as it is unknown, and this affair is so notorious, that it is very bad—O, shockingly bad. But do not listen to me with such a look of strange wonder—astonishment is now quite obsolete, nobody submits to do any thing so simple. Do assume a virtue,

though you have it not, or I too shall forget myself. In a word, Mordaunt, I had not been long married when I discovered that Lady Sandymore was deficient in the most essential quality of a wife—the heart.”

“Who is the seducer?” said Mordaunt, emphatically.

“Pray don’t be so tragical, I beg you won’t,” cried the Earl, to disguise his own emotion. “You consider this affair too sentimentally. Believe me, I have been long indifferent about the woman. I wish but for a good reason to be well rid of her society—my respect for her family, as I shall of course say to the world; but to deal more plainly with you, my own conduct will not allow me to do more. Besides, the disgrace of a public exposure would break the proud heart of her father, nor can I make money by the dishonour of my wife.”

His Lordship then proceeded to tell his friend, that, soon after his marriage, he discovered that the whole mind of Lady Sandymore was bent on the figure which she herself would make in society, by which she had disgusted his feelings,

and embittered his existence. That, giving way to the poignancy of disappointment, he had rushed into the follies of the town, which, however, instead of alleviating the irksomeness of his condition, only exasperated his reflections, and drove him, with redoubled frenzy, into a fresh career of dissipation ; during which the Countess pursued her own triumphant self-exhibition, and reached the summit of her ambitious vanity.

“ I thought,” said his Lordship, “ that pride, if not virtue, would, however, have preserved her, but she has fallen ; and, as in all similar cases, the husband is among the last that hears the news.”

He then related the incident of the burnt newspaper, and the paragraph.

Mordaunt agreed, that from so public a circumstance, there must be some grounds for the suspicion, and recommended that the servants should be examined.

“ But,” said the Earl, “ even were she guilty, I do not mean to institute any process for a divorce. Your head, however, is cooler than mine, I will be guided by you.”

“ Ah, my Lord !” cried Mordaunt, “ do not say to me that you can regard with indifference the misfortunes, far less the dishonour of a beautiful woman, to whom you were at one time so passionately attached.”

After some further conversation, it was arranged that Mordaunt should immediately go to Lady Sandymore, and that the Earl should, in the meantime, remain in Sackville-Street, and wait the result of the interview.

While Mordaunt was absent on this interesting mission, his Lordship sat for some time reviewing, with no favourable construction to himself, the rapid perdition of so many years of the best portion of his life. In the course of this reckoning, he blamed himself still more than in the morning, for the precipitancy with which he had, in a temporary fit of spleen, endeavoured to cancel the affection which he had cherished for his lady, and the folly of casting himself so thoroughly away, on account of a disappointment which it would have been more manly to have mastered. “ But,” said he, “ it is never too late to mend, and the sooner I begin the change the better.”

In the same moment he seated himself at Mor-daunt's table, and wrote a note to Mr Vellum, requesting him to bring, on the following morning, a statement of his affairs. This was requisite, in order to enable him to regulate his generosity, with respect to a settlement on the Countess ; and it was also required with a view to his own future conduct. For he was well aware that he had deeply encumbered his estates, and that before he could enter upon a new course of life, it would be necessary to abridge the prodigality of his household. The writing of this note to his Solicitor was, perhaps, the only decisive step he had taken for a number of years, and he felt, when it was done, something analogous to that glow of satisfaction, enjoyed by the strong or the bold after a successful exertion of strength and dexterity.

CHAPTER XXI

AN EVENT.

WHEN the Countess, after her return from Mrs Harridan, had sent for the Marquis her father, our hero had occasion to call at Sandyford-House from Mr Vellum. Her Ladyship having inadvertently given no orders to be denied, he was shewn in to the room where she happened to be then sitting. A visit from Andrew was little in accordance with the state of her feelings ; but she received him as usual ; he soon, however, discovered that something was the matter, and said, “ I’m thinking, my Leddy, it’s no vera convenient for me to be here, so I’ll just go awa’ at ance—but I hope my Lord’s weel, and that it’s no ony thing anent him that’s fashing your Ladyship.”

The publicity of a newspaper paragraph, and the familiarity with which Andrew was treated, removed any delicacy that might otherwise have been felt by the Countess on the subject, and she replied, "No ; stop where you are," and she then explained the cause of her anxiety.

"Really I dinna wonder ye're vext," said our hero ; "but every body kens the newspapers live by the clecking o' lees ; and I think, before you or my Lord gie them either credit or consequence, it would be as weel to sift the truth o't. I'm, as ye ken, my Leddy, but a novice ; howsomever, aiblins I may be o' a spark o' use in this ; so I'll get at the bottom o' the clash, an it be for nae mair than to shew my gratitude for the great ceevilities that I am beholden for, baith to your Leddyship and my Lord," and he instantly rose to go away, saying, jocularly, "Keep a good heart, my Leddy, a foul lie is no so durable as pock mark, it can be dighted off."

"True, but the stain it leaves behind," said her Ladyship, with a sigh.

"A snuff o' tobacco about stains ; your Leddyship's character's no a gauze gown or a worm web,

to be spoilt with a spittle, or any other foul thing out of the mouth of man." And in saying these words, he took his leave with that customary bob of the head, which served all the purposes of a graceful bow.

The moment that the Countess mentioned the paragraph, he had recollected that there was a young man in one of the newspaper offices, of the name of Nettle, of whom he had some slight acquaintance; and it occurred to him that by his means he might be able to reach the author of the slander. This Nettle had been educated with a view to the pulpit, but his disposition being loose and satirical, his father sent him to study the law under John Gledd. At the end of his apprenticeship, Nettle, according to the practice of the profession, went to Edinburgh, to complete his studies in the office of a Writer to the Signet, where he mingled with the swarm of minor wits that infest the Parliament-House, and being naturally clever, acquired a taste for polite literature, and sharpened his talent for satire. He possessed an amusing and lively fancy,—indeed, so lively, that

it proved prejudicial to himself; for while it rendered his company exceedingly diverting, it made him dislike his business, and in the end threw him upon the streets of London, a mere literary adventurer. In this state he fortunately obtained employment as a reporter; and at the time when our hero came to London, he was not only in considerable reputation as such, but was also a general contributor to most of the metropolitan periodical works, particularly the *Reviews*, in which the pungency of his wit was more remarkable than the soundness of his judgment. Our hero had brought an introductory letter to him from their old master; but he soon saw that the habits and disposition of Nettle were not congenial to that sober system of perseverance which he had laid down for the government of his own conduct.

On quitting Sandyford-House, Andrew went directly to the office where Nettle was employed, and it happened to be that of the very paper in which the mischievous paragraph appeared; in fact, the paragraph had been penned by Nettle himself, who, having accidentally heard something

of the rumours in circulation respecting Lord and Lady Sandyford, formed, in his own imagination, a complete and plausible conception of the whole intrigue, in which it was supposed her Ladyship had been engaged ; and when, from the ordinary channel, he received an account of the preparations for her party, he was in consequence tempted to write the paragraph, in order to anticipate a denouement, which, according to his notions, would necessarily take place soon, perhaps in the course of that evening.

Andrew had some difficulty in gaining access to Nettle, nor was he admitted until he had sent notice that he wished very earnestly and particularly to see him, “ on business of the uttermost importance.”

“ Well, and what’s this business of the uttermost importance that you have got with me ?” said Nettle, laughingly.

“ It’s a thing wherein your helping hand, Mr Nettle, can be o’ a great sufficiency,” replied Andrew, sedately. “ My master, Mr Vellum, has one Lord Sandyford for a client, and something has been put out in the papers this morning con-

cerning his leddy, the whilk is like to breed a terrible stramash."

Nettle was instantaneously smitten with the horrors of a prosecution for a libel, and the satirical mirthfulness with which he had received Andrew, was turned into anxiety.

"Indeed!" he exclaimed, "what is it? what has it been about? in what paper has it appeared?"

"I can tell you naething o' a' that," said Andrew; "but I would gie a plack and a bawbee to ken the author. Noo, Mr Nettle, as ye're acquaint wi' a' the jookery-cookery of newsmaking, I thought that aiblins ye're in a capacity to throw some light on the subject."

Nettle was alarmed and disconcerted. It was of no less importance to him, that the object of our hero's visit should be concealed from his own principals, than that the author should remain unknown to the offended parties.

"But are you sure, Mr Wylie," said he, "that the paragraph alluded to applies to Lady Sandysford?"

“ It surely does that,” replied Andrew, “ or it would nae hae been so kentspeckle.”

Nettle requested Andrew to wait till he could find the paper, to look at it, but in reality to gain a few minutes for consideration.

“ The paragraph is, I see, in our paper,” said Nettle, returning with the paper in his hand ; “ but it does not apply to Lady Sandyford. It can only have been supposed to allude to her Ladyship, by having followed the account of the preparations for her assembly.”

Andrew, on looking at it, saw that this explanation was feasible ; indeed, that, without the context, it was a very harmless pasquinade ; and he observed, “ But it’s been an awfu’ mistake, Mr Nettle. Is there no a possibility of an explanation ?”

“ O yes,” cried Nettle gaily, relieved from his apprehensions, by perceiving the harmless nature of the paragraph when considered by itself ; and aware, that if the matter should ever come to any legal issue, it would be in his power to plead the advertisement account of the preparations, by producing the original paper from which it was taken,

and arguing that the paragraph was a separate and distinct communication—"O yes," he replied, "it is easy to remove entirely the impression produced by this mistake; but, Andrew, ye should know that folks in London cannot afford their time for nothing; and that characters, like other things, when they are bought must be paid for."

"Very true, Mr Nettle," said our hero drily; "and when they are sto'en, the thief maun not only make restitution, but may be made to suffer punishment."

Nettle looked at Andrew, incredulous to his own ears, not having previously conceived him possessed of any such acuteness; and his newly recovered self-possession was completely overset, when Wylie added, "I fear and doobt, Mr Nettle, that ye ken mair about this than ye let on; and I would council you, as a frien', to put your shoulder to the wheel, and get out o' the mire, and on your way rejoicing, wi' a' the speed ye dow. For if there's to be ony compounding about this black job, it will hae to come frae your side—but I say naething. My betters will judge for

themselves. If you hae brewed gude yill, ye'll drink the better—A lie's a lie ony hoo, Mr Nettle; and a leddy o' quality's name is no to be blotted wi' newspapers' ink wi' impunity; so ye'll just comport yoursel, Mr Nettle, as ye think right."

The reporter, finding he had not the simpleton to deal with that he had supposed—for his first idea was, that the Countess might be willing to pay handsomely for an effectual contradiction of the slander—he changed his tune, and said, "You have misunderstood me, Mr Wylie; all I meant was, that, before this unfortunate mistake gets into the other papers, I could by my influence stop it; but, as it must be at some expence to them, and loss of time to me, I trust it will be considered."

"Considered?" cried our hero, indignantly; "a flail to the laitheron's hurdies. Mr Nettle, I suspect and believe that your han's no clear o' the coom o' this wark. Get it wash't—get it wash't, or it may be dried wi' a hempen towel."

And so saying, he left the office, where the astonished Nettle, who had not deemed him many degrees above idiocy, stood enchained to the spot.

No time, however, was to be lost. In the course of the briefest space possible, Nettle was round to all the other offices, and got the scandal not only strangled, but even paragraphs inserted, which had the effect of turning the suspicion, so pointed against Lady Sandyford, entirely in another direction. But to her, however, the mischief was done.

The business, on which Andrew had been sent to Sandyford-house, was not of any very pressing importance, and he was sensible that he had already greatly exceeded his time; but confident that the service in which he was engaged would excuse a much greater trespass, instead of going from the newspaper-office to Mr Vellum's chambers, he went directly back to Sandyford-house, and reached the door at the same time with Mordaunt, who, slightly glancing at his insignificant appearance, regarded him as some tradesman's messenger, and was not a little surprised when he was ushered, along with himself, into the library. The Countess was up stairs with her father.

“ You belong to the family, I presume ?” said

the country gentleman, with an accent of interrogation.

“ I canna just say that,” was Andrew’s answer ;
“ but I’m concerned for them.”

Mordaunt knew not what to think of his companion, and looked at him for a moment with an expression of the most ineffable scorn ; but the oddity of Andrew’s appearance almost instantly reversed his feelings.

While they were thus conversing, the Marquis of Avonside’s carriage, which had driven round the square, drew up at the door, and immediately after his Lordship handed the Countess in, and taking his place beside her, was instantly conveyed home. The servants in the hall were at no loss to guess the motives and complexion of this proceeding ; and one of the footmen, as soon as the carriage had left the house, informed Mordaunt of what had taken place. Andrew, on hearing this news, recollected the old proverb, that no good was ever got by meddling between man and wife ; and prudently resolved to escape immediately from the scene of action.

“ Will ye, sir,” said he to Mordaunt, “ be

pleased to tell my Lord, that Andrew Wylie was at the newspaper-office, and found out there that the whole tot of the story about my Leddy's fox-paw, is just the clishmaclaver of a misleart reporter, and he needna fash himsel any mair about it."

"May I ask, sir," said Mordaunt, supposing that Andrew belonged to some of the newspapers, which at that time were chiefly in the hands of Scotchmen, "with what paper you are connected?"

"Me connectit with a newspaper!—Na, na, sir; I'm of an honest trade—I'm learning to be a writer wi' Mr Vellum, a very respectable solicitor in Lincoln's Inn. Only I hae been doing a bit job between han's for my Leddy."

Mordaunt was still more at a loss than ever to comprehend the office and character of our hero, and would have entered into a conversation with him more particularly relative to the newspaper; but Andrew was apprehensive that he had already gone too far with a stranger, although, by the manner in which Mordaunt conducted himself towards the servants, he perceived that he consi-

dered himself on terms of intimacy with their master. Under this impression, he therefore moved hastily to the door, without replying to a question concerning the paragraph; and, with a curious and significant look as he turned the bolt, said, "I wish you a vera gude morning."

CHAPTER XXII.

NEGOCIATION.

WHEN the Earl was informed by Mordaunt, that the Countess had left Sandyford-house with her father, he immediately returned home, accompanied by his friend. Soon after this Sir Charles Runnington called ; and, on being shewn into the library, where they were still standing, he made a low and very formal bow to the Earl, and then stated that he was commissioned by his noble friend, the Marquis of Avonside, to inquire what his Lordship had to allege against the conduct of Lady Sandyford.

The Earl, as well as Mordaunt, was puzzled by the narrow and almost technical ground which the Marquis had taken ; but his Lordship re-

plied, "The Countess herself best knows for what reason she has quitted her home."

"Upon that point," said Sir Charles Runnington, "I have no instructions."

"Then," cried the Earl, sharply, "the only answer I can return is, let her Ladyship say what she wishes me to do, and it shall be instantly done."

"If I understood Lord Avonside clearly," answered Sir Charles, "he is averse to any formal separation; and the Countess is not in a condition at present to come to any determination."

"Every thing rests with herself," said Lord Sandyford, with emotion. "I have nothing to desire, but that she may find more happiness elsewhere, than I fear she has done with me. I cannot at this moment say, what it is in my power to allow her for a separate establishment; but tomorrow I shall. Assure her that——" He could say no more, but bowed to Sir Charles, and left the room.

"This is a most unfortunate affair," said Mordaunt.

“ But not unexpected, I understand,” replied Sir Charles ; “ her Ladyship’s family have long been aware of her situation.”

“ Indeed !” cried Mordaunt ; “ and how is it that Sandyford was never informed ? Who is the paramour ?”

“ Paramour !” exclaimed Sir Charles, with indignation. “ This is adding cruelty and insult to the wrongs which she has already suffered. Lord Sandyford knows that there is no guilt on her part ; she has long been the victim of his negligence, and her reputation is blasted by the consequences.”

“ This is dreadful !” cried Mordaunt. “ Do you mean to say, that although the levity of her conduct has been so notorious as to become the game of a newspaper pasquinade, that her husband is entirely to blame ?”

“ Sir,” replied Sir Charles, formally, “ I did not come from my noble friend, her father, to enter into any controversy on the subject. The Earl agrees to a separation ; and from his known character, I doubt not the arrangement will be

completed in a satisfactory manner. I must confess, however, that I have been surprised at his emotion; he seemed much more affected than I could previously have imagined."

"The character of my friend is, I find, not well known," said Mordaunt; "but I hope the separation will not be final."

"After what has taken place, and the experience they have had of each other, it is the best thing that can now happen," replied Sir Charles. "But his Lordship will no doubt feel that it is due to his own honour to investigate the newspaper calumny, and to bear testimony to his conviction of his injured lady's innocence."

"Is there no chance of our being able to effect a reconciliation if she is innocent?"

"I will take no part in any proceeding having that for its object," said Sir Charles. "My noble friend the Marquis assures me that Lady Sandysford is one of the worst used wives in the world. I rely on his Lordship's honour and integrity for the truth of the statement; and with that impression I should deem myself base indeed were I to

recommend any thing so derogatory as the measure you suggest."

Sir Charles then left the room, and Mordaunt went to the Earl in his own apartment.

Sir Charles Runnington was a political adherent of the Marquis of Avonside, and had been employed in several diplomatic missions, in which, it was said, he shewed great self-command, and upheld the dignity of his sovereign with all propriety, but none of his missions ever were successful. The parliamentary adversaries of the Marquis said, that this was owing to his inability to understand the spirit of his instructions; but it could never be shown, that in any one instance, he did not adhere, with a most surprising constancy, to the letter. Besides this political connexion, he was related to the Countess by her mother; on which account, the Marquis had requested his interference. But although no man could well be really less qualified to manage any affair of delicacy to a favourable and conciliatory issue, Sir Charles possessed many external attributes, which may be termed the minting of a gentleman—the marks which designate the coin, but convey no

idea of the intrinsic value and purity of the metal. He was grave, and fair spoken—precise in his language, erect in his carriage, neat in his dress, and his hair always powdered and arranged exactly in the same manner as he wore it when first introduced at Court.

On returning to the Marquis, he gave his Lordship a very circumstantial account of what had taken place with the Earl, and also of what had passed with Mordaunt.

Although this report was the precise truth as far as it went, yet it conveyed no idea of the manner in which his Lordship had been affected; and even what was said, suffered in the repetition, by the cold medium through which it was conveyed.

The Marquis was, in some points of character, not unlike Sir Charles, but he was older; and what was precision in the one, approaching to pedantry, was sedate pomposity in the other. The accident of happening in the outset of life to be successful in the management of some of those trifling parliamentary matters that the ministers of the day are in the practice of assigning to the hereditary supporters of government, he was taken

with the conceit of being a statesmen. In the deliberations of the senate he always took a part, and talked long, and said as little to the purpose as any other speaker on either side of the House. But notwithstanding the prosing inefficacy of his public conduct, he was upon the whole what is called a steady character—uniformly voting with every successive batch of ministers, and never asking more than a reasonable share of official patronage. In private life he was punctual and honourable; and although he never said a witty thing, nor understood a wise one, he possessed many of the most respectable traits in the domestic character of an English nobleman. It is needless, however, to add, that he was nevertheless not at all fitted to act the prudentest part in the peculiarities of his daughter's situation.

He communicated to the Countess a faithful account of what had passed; but his narrative was still more deficient in conveying a true impression of what had taken place, than even that of Sir Charles; insomuch, that her Ladyship's humiliation was greatly augmented to find that her husband was seemingly, as it appeared to her, so glad

to be rid of her on her own terms. She said, however, nothing, but requested to be left alone; and the moment that her father had retired, she gave vent to her feelings in long continued weeping. This greatly relieved her mind, and she was able afterwards to reflect calmly on her situation. She recalled to mind some of those inadvertent sarcasms in which the Earl first manifested his dislike of her passion for what he called self-exhibition, and the artificial equality of her manners, which he sometimes peevishly derided as hypocrisy; and she was sensible that there must have been some error in her system, since it had failed to interest, or rather since it had served to disgust, the only man whom she really cared to please.

The behaviour, too, of Mrs Harridan, had taught her also an important lesson. In the course of their short interview that morning, the sordidness of her art had been so plainly disclosed, that it necessarily produced a deep and a resentful impression. Lady Sandyford could not disguise to herself the practical illustration which it afforded of those maxims which she had been instructed to respect as the essential principles of fashionable

life, as if there were any thing in fashion that could be at variance with the ties and charms which constitute the cement of society.

The conflict of these reflections had an immediate effect on her Ladyship's mind; and from that hour, she resolved to act another part, more agreeable to her own original nature and character. The rock was indeed now struck; and the stream that was to spread freshness in the desert of her wedded life, began to flow.

Her first inclination was to return immediately home to her husband, and express to him frankly what she thought and suffered; but this a false pride prevented her from doing, even while she confessed to herself that she had been too rashly induced by her father to abandon the conjugal roof.

The Marquis was obliged, or rather so felt himself, to attend the House of Lords that evening; he was indeed anxious to take a part in the debate, chiefly to shew how lightly he considered the derogatory predicament in which his daughter had been placed. Sir Charles Runnington was at the same time instructed by his Lordship to go round

the club-houses in St James's Street, in order to inform the most distinguished male gossips of those fraternities, that the separation of the Earl and Countess of Sandyford, so far from being occasioned by any imputed guilt on the part of her Ladyship, was sought by herself, and advised and sanctioned by her father.

When the Marquis returned in the evening, he found the Countess alone in the drawing-room, comparatively at her ease, and attended by Flounce, her own maid. As he had made what he deemed an able speech, although it contained neither fact nor argument to illustrate the expediency of the measure he endeavoured to advocate, he was on excellent terms with himself, and complimented the Countess on the fortitude with which she sustained herself. But instead of replying to him in the same strain of good humour, she briefly told him that she was arranging with Flounce to quit London next morning; and that it was her intention to go at once to Elderbower, the seat of the dowager Lady Sandyford, her mother-in-law.

“Is your Ladyship of a sound mind in this determination?” exclaimed the Marquis, in his ora-

torical manner. “Do you not expose yourself to a most unwelcome reception?—Reception, did I say?—It may be a repulse.”

“No matter,” replied the Countess in a calm firm voice, “I will make the attempt. If I stay here, or if I go to any of my own relations, I lend colouring to the slanders in circulation against me; but if I take up my abode with the mother of my husband, and I am sure she will receive me kindly, the malice of the world will be rebuked and silenced.”

The Countess perceived that her father was not satisfied with the resolution she had taken; but as it was the most expedient, indeed the best which at the moment she could adopt, this gave her no pain, and she soon after wished him good night.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PERPLEXITIES.

DURING the remainder of the day after the Countess left Sandyford-House, the Earl continued uneasy, irritable, and thoughtful. Mor-daunt dined with him, and in the evening he began to rally a little ; but in the midst of his jocularity, for he was naturally disposed to indulge his fancy in a humorous play upon the passing topics of the moment, he would suddenly fall into fits of abstraction, from which he as suddenly recovered himself, as if awakening from a trance of which he had been unconscious. His friend saw his mental struggle, and exerted himself in every possible manner to draw him from the pressure of his unhappy thoughts ; but all his efforts proved

unavailing, and he at last said, "Sandyford, this will not do; you cannot, I perceive plainly, meet this event with that indifference which you have affected, and which you are so strangely ambitious as to endeavour still to maintain even before me."

"I confess it," replied his Lordship, "and I should have borne it even more weakly had Augusta been really guilty; but how can I invite a reunion, when that old mandarin, Sir Charles Runnington, declares my own behaviour has been such, that her friends, as well as herself, are desirous of the separation? Now, if I had thought she cared half the value of an odd trick for me, or even could but have cared, I would have been a very different sort of a husband. However, the Rubicon is passed; but one thing at least I may still try, and that is to prove that I am not altogether the irreclaimable Don Juan, which the world so charitably supposes."

The manner in which this was said, though generally in a tone of freedom and gaiety, had yet an accent of sadness that moved the compassion of Mordaunt, and he contemplated the endeavoured

cheerfulness of his friend, as he would have looked upon a sleeping infant, covered with a lace veil,—a sight which, notwithstanding the health, the smile, and the bloom that shines through, often suggests melancholy associations to the affectionate heart.

“ I think, Sandyford, you would feel yourself better, were you to be more communicative,” said Mordaunt. “ There can be nothing in your situation that a friend may not know.”

“ True,” replied the Earl ; “ but a man seldom chooses his friend to be the confidant of his sins. I have been worse perhaps than you imagine, though I believe not quite so bad as the world has represented me. But I have done enough of ill to know, that the task I undertake is not only to make a character, but to recover one. However, let us bid adieu to the gloomy pile of my concerns for the present, and tell me, Mordaunt, something of your own—the affair with Miss Beauchamp—When is the wedding to be ?”

“ Why, to say the truth, my Lord,” replied Mordaunt, laughingly ; “ although it is a settled point between us, there is yet a great impediment

to be overcome. The Baronet, her father, it seems, many years ago, when Julia was but a child, made a compact with his neighbour, the late Mr Birchland, that she should be married to Jack Birchland, then quite a boy ; and if Birchland will take her, he swears nobody else shall have her."

" Ah me ! for aught that ever I could learn, the course of true love never did run smooth," cried his Lordship ; " and Birchland will be a cursed fool if he don't, begging your pardon."

" Ay, but there are two words to a bargain,— Julia has something herself to say in the business," replied Mordaunt.

" Then Birchland is really inclined to stand by the compact?" said the Earl.

" I'm half afraid he is ; and what is more, Julia herself has some suspicion of the same sort."

" Now, I understand the whole affair," exclaimed the Earl, laughing, and interrupting him, " you are come to London to meet her, and a stolen match is in contemplation."

" You are mistaken," said Mordaunt, somewhat gravely, " Miss Beauchamp will not submit

to any thing so derogatory to herself ; but it seems that her cousin, Letitia Irby, has taken a fancy for Birchland, and our immediate object is to make them man and wife, and by that means frustrate or defeat the pertinacious designs of Sir Thomas."

" There are no such ingenious nest-builders, after all, as you birds of the bowers," cried the Earl, gaily ; but checking himself, added, " the plot is good—very good—but how is it to be brought to a bearing ?"

" Julia has persuaded her father to come to town," said Mordaunt, " and Miss Irby is with them. They arrived this morning. Birchland is expected in the course of a few days."

" Were Birchland one of our town-bred sparrows, and not a chaffinch of the grove, I should advise," replied the Earl, " the pretty Letitia to coo for lovers amidst her native shades ; but as I doubt not he is as guileless as a blackbird, no harm may come of their billing even in a London cage. However, we shall see."

Mordaunt, during this sally, looked seriously

at the Earl, and said, gravely, "Your mind, Sandyford, I am sorry to see, is accustomed to regard lightly some things which you were once in the habit of considering very differently. Birchland were a villain, if he could take advantage of a fond girl's innocent affections."

His Lordship blushed, and was for a moment out of countenance, but recovering his usual familiarity, replied, "You John Bulls of the country serve up your morality in the husk; a man of pleasure among you cannot taste a kernel, without being supposed to have cracked the decalogue. That same word, villain, is a whoreson phrase—dowlas, filthy dowlas,"—but he added, in a tone so deep and emphatic, that it made the heart of Mordaunt vibrate in sympathetic anguish, "The word, however, suits the action, but in using it, I suppose you forgot at the moment what my wife and her friends think of me."

Mordaunt for several seconds was unable to make any answer, and then he added, "Your whole life, Sandyford, has been a riddle. The town term of it has distressed all those who es-

teemed you, and who cherished expectations which you were once able to realize.”

“ I am still able,” cried the Earl, with a generous confidence in his own powers ; “ but the jade must go to grass. I intend, with all convenient speed, to settle my townly affairs, and then begin another course of being at Chastington-hall,—an Elysium, as my mother has often told me, where the manes of my ancestors, in the shape, I suppose, of old portraits, would scowl their brave encouragement on my emulous endeavours to revive the faded lustre of their blood. But to that, like to many other of the good old dowager’s saws and sayings, I have been no better than the infidel. However, I am resolved for a time to take up my abode at Chastington, and by the post to-day I sent orders to prepare for my reception. Were you not so engaged, I would ask you to go with me, for I believe it is a huge old Ann-Radcliffe place, a spectrey surrounded by a rookery, which I was on the point at one time of selling, on account of its distance from town, and the red-haired bumpkins, that came up from it occasionally to see London, and to keep their lord and

lady in hot water, and their fellows in the hall in laughter, all the time they stay."

Mordaunt smiled at the latter reason for parting with the ancestral residence of all the Sandys.

"Upon my honour," said his Lordship, "there is more truth in it than you think. You can have no conception how much we were plagued by the sons of the patriarchal fixtures of Chastington-hall, coming here to learn the craft and mystery of footmanry; and the worst of it was, that, after they were initiated in all the tricks of the trade, I was obliged to give them characters to my acquaintance, in the perfect conviction, that any principle of honesty or sobriety, which they brought with them from the country, was entirely lost in this house. The possession of the place made me, indeed, feel as if I kept a roguery for the supply of the London market; and conscience, with a few secondary considerations arising from losses at play, urged me to part with it. But nobody could be found rich enough, or foolish enough, to make the purchase."

“ Surely you have never seen Chastington,” said Mordaunt, shocked that his Lordship should think with so much levity of parting with a domain and mansion, which, for many ages, a long line of noble ancestors had successively delighted to enrich and adorn.

“ O never!—A hundred and seventy miles from London, in a midland county—not even a market-town within half a score of leagues—only a village at the gate, with a single ale-house, where a cuckoo-clock chinks at one side of the chimney-place, and the curate, smoking his pipe in an antique elbow-chair, churms at the other—was it possible to vegetate with Lady Sandyford? I did, indeed, at our marriage, intend to make it our principal residence; but a blight fell upon all my intentions of that period, and I never since could endure the idea of looking at Chastington, till the adventure of this morning reminded me of what my mother used to say about the presiding genii that inhabit there.”

After some further general conversation relative to the Earl's plans, Mordaunt rose to bid him

good night. "Come to me to-morrow as early as you can," said his Lordship, as he shook him by the hand at parting; "and in the meantime put as charitable a construction as possible on any thing that may have had a tendency to lower me in your esteem. I am not, my dear fellow, half so bad as I have long seemed—all that which others regarded as the inebriation of pleasure, was to me the frenzy of a fever. My outward and my inner man were in afflicting opposition. The voluptuous draught that I was seen to swallow so greedily, was but drunk as an opiate to allay the mental agony which I suffered. I felt as if the spring and fountain-head of all my motives and happiness were cut off, and the future rendered an arid and devouring desert. A worm was in the core of my heart, and a fire in my brain; and for three years my spirit was parched with extinguishable despair. My dissipation was martyrdom; and yet I wore the mask of a joyous libertine so well, that my hidden misery was never discovered. But the mask, Mordaunt, is now off,—the crisis of my distemper is past,—

and, as the faculty say, a change of scene, with country air and exercise, will perhaps complete the cure."

During this address, which his Lordship delivered with considerable energy, while he still held his friend by the hand, Mordaunt was greatly moved; and at the conclusion, when the vehemence of the Earl had subsided into a more familiar strain, he said, "Sandyford, you ought to have told me what you were suffering. It was too much to put to hazard, fame, fortune, and self-respect, without consulting any friend."

"It was," replied his Lordship, "I am sensible it was; but if I could have been so prudent as to have taken the advice of any friend, I should not then have been so mad as to require it. There are states of the mind which friends should see are morbid, without being told. One of the worst symptoms of intellectual distemperature, is the effort which the patient makes to conceal his malady. Could it have been for a moment imagined by my friends—had they thought seriously on the case, that I would at once forego all my early ha-

bits of emulation, the love of fame, and the desire of power, and tie myself to the chariot-wheels of hazard and sensuality, without a cause?—No, Mordaunt; when you heard of my falling off, you ought to have come to me. It was not for you to stand aloof, and see me perish; for, without vanity, I may now say, humiliated as I am by the sense of my fruitless talents and abortive life, that you at least knew my original worth.”

The feelings of Mordaunt were overcome, and hastily bidding his Lordship good night, he rushed from the room to conceal the emotion he was unable any longer to control. The heart of the Earl was relieved by what had passed; the fine natural elasticity of his mind, which enabled him to pass with such felicitous ease from one topic to another, dilated out in the cheerful anticipation of being yet able to redeem some portion of the promise of his youth; and he retired to his bed-chamber in a more serene and temperate mood than he had for several years enjoyed. The only anxiety he suffered was on account of his Lady, and he sighed as he said, looking at her picture,

which hung over the mantle-piece, "And so, Augusta, you are also gone. I thought but last night I could have better spared you. No matter; if you are happier—You have all the kindest wishes of a man that loved you too well."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A MAN OF BUSINESS.

AT the time when the Earl had requested Vellum to be with him in the morning, the Solicitor, punctual to the hour, was at Sandyford-house, with a hasty sketch of the state of his Lordship's pecuniary concerns. He had heard something of what had happened; but the true circumstances were so different from the report, that he could not help saying, "I presume there will be no proceedings."

"None in your way," replied the Earl dryly, as he perused the statement; adding, "This looks better, Vellum, than I expected. Have you any account of my debts and mortgages?"

Vellum said, somewhat diffidently, that he had; and produced a paper. The Earl, on looking it

over, was surprised to observe, that Vellum himself was by far the most considerable creditor; he took no notice, however, of this circumstance. For the money which he had borrowed at different times, he had paid an enormous rate of usury; but he had never any reason before to suspect that Vellum was the real lender, nor did he do so at this time. He only thought, what was indeed the fact, that Vellum had afterwards bought up the securities.

While the Earl was perusing the list, Vellum watched his eye anxiously, but could discover nothing of what was passing in his mind. On returning it to him, his Lordship, however, said, somewhat emphatically, "Vellum, this is a black account; we must use our best endeavours to bleach the complexion of some of these ill-favoured items."

The Solicitor felt the full force and weight of this remark, and said at once, "I am aware, my Lord, that some parts of it are not exactly what your Lordship perhaps expected to see—I allude to my own claims; but the truth of the case is simply this: Had I not redeemed the bonds which constitute my claim, some other would; and I do

not think that any person into whose possession they might have come, would have been more delicate than myself. I might certainly, as your Lordship's professional agent, have resisted the debt altogether ; and, in that manner, the obligation to pay them might have been got rid of. But your Lordship would never suffer me to establish a legal right at the expence of a moral wrong. I might also, my Lord, for such things are not uncommon, have exhibited the claim under different names, by which my interest in the business would have been dissimulated ; but I am incapable of submitting to practise any such equivocation."

" I am perfectly satisfied, Vellum, with your integrity as a man of business," replied his Lordship ; " and the candour of your declaration confirms me in the justice that I have uniformly, in my own mind, done to you as such. My confidence in you is none abated, and I do not consider the profit which you may have gained by these dealings as procured at my expence ; but, doubtless, the only reason which induced you not to tell me that I might have occasionally redeemed the pound of flesh, arose from your thorough

knowledge of the state of my circumstances, arising from your professional trusts as my agent."

Vellum bit his lips; but the Earl in a moment changed his tone, and said cheerfully, "However, the matter is done, and it must not be repeated; I wish you all happiness with your gains; and the sooner they are realized, the more I shall be content. But one thing you must, in the meantime, do for me. I have paid more attention to that Scottish curiosity, Wylie, than perhaps I ought to have done. He, however, served to amuse me when every other thing had become stale, flat, and unprofitable; and he cannot but have formed some expectations from my interest or influence. I believe he is honest."

"It is impossible to doubt it," replied Vellum; "but his talents are not of a high order, nor has his education been of the best sort."

"The being," cried his Lordship, gaily, "has not half the capacity, I believe, of a young elephant; but his very deficiencies have been as talents with me; and now that I am determined to quit London, I wish to do something for him. You must take him into partnership, Vellum."

The Solicitor was thunderstruck ; and in an accent of astonishment, said, “ My Lord, it is not possible—he is too young—he knows nothing of business.”

“ He is old enough,” replied his Lordship coldly, “ to receive profit ; nor does it require any particular knowledge to do so. But perhaps you would rather give him a salary.”

Vellum bowed, and the Earl continued ; “ Then it should be on agreement for a term of years—Say seven. How much will you give him ?”

The decision of character which the Earl had in this interview so unexpectedly manifested, overawed Vellum, who had hitherto considered him merely as a common man of fashion. He had never, in the course of their previous intercourse, once suspected the dormant powers of his Lordship’s mind, which, like a stream long dammed up, and mantled over with water-weeds and rushes, seemed incapable of being applied to any effectual purpose. But he now perceived that it would be useless to parry with such a character ; and, therefore, with the off-hand alacrity of a man of the world, he replied, “ It is your Lordship’s pleasure

to promote the fortune of the young man, and it is my duty to comply with your Lordship's reasonable wishes on the subject. I will give him five hundred pounds a-year, for seven years; although I do not think he will ever make any available proficiency in his profession."

"You do not then seriously think that he is likely to attain eminence as a lawyer?" said the Earl earnestly.

"I do not," was the emphatic answer.

"Then," replied his Lordship, "five hundred a-year, for seven years, is too little. You will give him seven hundred and fifty."

"It is far beyond his wants, habits, and ideas."

Vellum, in saying these few words, was rebuked by the grave expression of his Lordship's eye; and stopping as if he had been interrupted, looked confused.

The Earl, after a pause of some ten or twenty seconds, rose from his seat, and standing with his back to the fire, said to the Solicitor, who had also risen at the same time, "I am not sure, Mr Vellum, that any man has a right to prescribe li-

mits to another's fortune. You will give Mr Wyllie seven hundred and fifty pounds a-year, for seven years, if you think my business and connexions can, with a reasonable advantage to yourself, afford so much."

There was no withstanding either the manner or the matter of this. Vellum bowed with profound respect, and said, "It shall be done, my Lord; and I ought to add, that it is in my power to comply with your Lordship's request."

"I thank you, Vellum; you have obliged me;" and the Earl took him cordially by the hand. "We shall talk no more of these matters. My only instructions now to you are, let a full account be made out, and sent to me as soon as possible; exhibiting an exact view of my affairs; with a table, shewing in what time my debts may be discharged. I will take it with me into the country, where I shall be able to determine the amount to which I must limit my expenditure."

This was evidently intended to conclude the interview; and the Solicitor, sensible of the intimation, accordingly took his leave. In quitting the

room, the Earl, however, said to him, with his wonted freedom, "You can dine with me, I hope?"

Vellum accepted the invitation, but with a little more formality than usual. The Earl smiled at the change, and added, in his most gracious and conciliating manner, "By the way, Vellum, this house must remain empty while I am in the country, for I do not intend that it shall be let; you had as well come here and live; you will take better care of the pictures and furniture than servants; and I hope you and Mrs Vellum will oblige me in this. You need not materially increase your establishment, as I shall leave some of the old servants."

Vellum looked at his Lordship. On any former occasion, had such a proposition been made to him, he would have laughingly shaken his head in thankful acceptance; but the singular lustre with which the latent character of the Earl shone out upon him, smote him with a sense of reverence that overpowered all his wonted familiarity, and he said, with the most profound respect, "I crave your Lordship's pardon for having evinced any reluctance to comply with your request. I ought to

have known better the obligations that I owe to your Lordship, and the magnanimity of your disposition." He then said, somewhat less formally, but perhaps with more effect, "I am not, however, the only one, my Lord, who has been long in error with respect to your Lordship."

"Come, come, Vellum, no more of that," cried the Earl, interrupting him; "I have myself, perhaps, been the most in error of you all. But as I have turned over a new leaf in the book of life, it is as well that the first record to be made thereon is what I shall not regret. Bring Wylie with you, that I may see with what humour the Caliban sustains his new fortune."

The Solicitor bowed and retired.

CHAPTER XXV.

GRATITUDE.

FROM the transactions of the preceding day, Wylie had been thoughtful and anxious. He studiously avoided the conversation of his companions in the office, and applied himself with more than wonted diligence to his tasks at the desk. He had formed expectations with respect to the favour of Lord Sandyford, which he thought were likely to be frustrated by the unfortunate situation of the Earl's domestic affairs, and ever and anon a cold feeling came over his heart, such as often saddens the spirit of the young adventurer, when his prospects are suddenly clouded. Vellum, on returning from his Lordship, summoned him into his own apartment, and somewhat abruptly told him of his good fortune.

“ It’s vera kind of my Lord,” said Andrew ; “ really it’s vera kind—he’s a nice man, and mair in him than he’s likened to ; I couldna hae thought he would hae done so meikle for me already.”

“ Then you have expected,” cried Vellum, “ that he would do something for you ?”

“ I surely had reason,” was the reply. “ It couldna be thought but that in time I might hae ventured to ask my Lord’s helping hand, considering his discretion towards me.”

“ The idea did credit to your sagacity, Wylie,” said Vellum, ironically ; “ and I suppose you exerted yourself to the best of your ability to amuse his Lordship ?”

“ Nae doubt I did—nae doubt I did that,” cried our hero ; “ it would hae been an unco thing in the like o’ me no to hae done a’ in my capacity to pleasure my Lord.”

“ Upon my word, there is more in you than I gave you credit for,” replied the Solicitor, sneeringly, feeling as if he had been in some degree overreached by the part which Andrew had played ; adding, more sedately, “ But, now that you

have gained your ends, and by his Lordship's generosity are placed in a condition to support the appearance of a gentleman, I hope you will set in seriously to your profession, and throw off your ridiculous manners for the future."

"That would be a doing, indeed," exclaimed our hero; "when you are just at this precious moment telling me that they have already brought me in seven hunder and fifty pounds a-year."

This answer puzzled the lawyer, who laughed, as he said, "Well, well, take your own way; but it is no longer necessary for you to be so penurious."

"That's vera true," replied Andrew, "and I'm thankful it is sae; but if I dinna save now, where will I, in the lang run, be a whit the better for my Lord's bountiful patronage? No, sir; ye maun just let me ride my ain horse wi' my ain ha'ding."

Mr Vellum suddenly broke off the conversation, and turned his attention to some matter of business; and our hero, on going to his place at the desk, in the fulness of his heart, wrote a letter to his grandmother; but without indulging

in any expression beyond the wonted temperance of his ordinary manner of addressing the affectionate old woman, he began by stating, that for some time he had been kept thrang both by night and by day. “ But I have no reason to complain, for Providence has been pleased to raise up for me a friend, by whose instrumentality Mr Vellum has settled on me a very satisfactory wage ; the which will enable me to shew more kindness to you than I have yet had it in my power to do ; and I think it my loving duty to send you herein, out of the fore-end of my earnings, something to buy a new gown, or any other small convenience that ye may stand in the need of ; hoping you will want for nothing, as I doubt not to have it in my power now to do as mickle, and more, from time to time.” And then he continued, “ I have seen of late but little of Charlie Pierston, but he’s in very good health, to the best of my knowledge, but a mischievous clever ramplor, and never devals with cracking his jokes on me. However, I have fallen in, notwithstanding the unfashion of my apparel, with some creditable acquaintance ; but as you ken nothing anent them, I needna fash you with their

names, nor how it was." And he concluded, by assuring the old woman, that it would be his honest endeavour to give satisfaction to his friends, whoever they were, and to none more than to her to whose care he was beholden for every thing but his being.

This letter afforded great delight to the old woman; she carried it round to all her neighbours, and even to the Manse, where the minister declared his entire satisfaction with the affectionate disposition, and the generous heart of poor Andrew.

"But," said he, "London is a very expensive place, so you must not count too confidently on his being able to fulfil his kind intentions; we might, however, have been better qualified to judge of that, had he told you the amount of his salary; however, upon the whole, you have great reason to be thankful. I believe he was always a well-disposed creature."

"That he was," replied Martha, in the pride of her heart; "he's a wee gair, I alloo; but the liberal man's the beggar's brother, and there's aye something to get by key or claut frae the miser's

coffer. I dinna stand in the lack o' his gift; but since it has come, I will buy a new gown for the kirk, that the whole parish may see Andrew's gudeness o' heart therein. Poor fallow—nae doubt he has had baith to thole and moil for what he has gotten, and it's a warld's wonder to me how he could gie sic a satisfaction. But naebody can tell what's in the shawp till it's shelt; Paul was lang a persecutor before he was an apostle, and the bonny butterflies begin the warld in the shape o' crawling kailworms."

Thus was the character of our hero for affection and generosity established, amidst the scenes of his youth; and when from time to time a five-pound note, in faithful adherence to his promise, came regularly to hand, the worthy Tannyhill as regularly lauded the liberality of the donor, and predicted his future greatness, while the delighted old woman, exulting in the constancy of his kindness, as often declared, "That she never wished to see him great, but only gude; for, as Solomon says, 'grant me neither poverty nor riches;' and Solomon kent weel what the warld is,—though, poor man, in his auld days he

gaed aften far ajee out o' the strait road in the gloaming, tapping wi' his gowden-headed staff at the harlot's door, and keeking in at her windows with his bald head and his grey haffits, when he should hae been sitting at hame on his throne, reading his Bible to his captains and counsellors in a kingly manner."

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN ALE-HOUSE.

AGREEABLY to the orders of the Countess, her father's travelling-carriage was at the door early in the morning. The day promised to be fine. The winter had been mild ; and although it was still February, the spring was seen big in the bud, and the fields seemed to be tinged with new verdure. A few lambs were scattered here and there among the flocks on the pastures ; and the air breathed an invigorating energy into the spirit, of which Lady Sandyford stood then much in need. Every thing presented the appearance of youth and renovation ; and the rising hopes of a richer harvest of pleasures in life, were in accordance with the appearance of nature, and the genial blandishments of the early year.

During the first three stages of her journey towards Elderbower, she met with nothing to draw her attention from the contemplation of her own situation. Indignant at the world, and mortified with herself, her thoughts alternately glowed with anger, and were darkened with sadness; but a general tendency to a more elevated course of reflection gradually acquired force, and her spirit rose as it were out of its passions and prejudices, like the moon ascending from behind the lurid glare, the smoke, and the dark masses of a great city.

When the carriage stopped to change horses at the Rose and Crown, in the village of Castle-Rooksborough, her Ladyship was roused from her reverie by the murmuring of a crowd round the door of a small public-house, on the opposite side of the way. There was something in the appearance of the people, which shewed that their feelings and sympathies were excited by some distressing occurrence, and she inquired what had happened. Several voices, all anxious to engage her humanity, answered together, that a poor unknown outlandish woman had been taken in labour

in the London coach, and being left there, had expired in giving birth to a beautiful female infant.

It was not the intention of the Countess to have halted, till she had reached the end of her journey ; but this incident had such a powerful effect on her newly awakened sensibilities, that she immediately determined to alight, and make some arrangement for the preservation of the helpless child. The crowd were touched with admiration at her generous compassion, and made way for her to the door of the public-house, with a degree of reverence, mingled with delight, that came over her heart with an influence more delicious than the early odours of the spring ; but no previous view of the privations of the poor had prepared her for the scene that she beheld on entering the house.

She was first shewn into the kitchen, or rather the door opened into that apartment. It was a rude low-ceiled room, with a large chimney at the one side, in which a hospitable pile of roots, and billets of wood, were cheerily burning. In the one corner hung several hams and fitches of ba-

con ; in the other stood a bench, somewhat dislocated in its limbs, with a high back, which bore a sort of outline resemblance to an old-fashioned sofa. Opposite to the fire was an inclosed recess, with an oaken-table in the middle, carved with the initials of some favoured customers ; and round it about six or seven labourers were seated, some with bread and cheese before them, others with tankards of ale ; two or three of them were smoking. They rose, as her Ladyship passed across to a room, where a number of women and children were assembled ; on entering which, her ear was pierced, and her heart penetrated, by the shrill and feeble wail of the new-born orphan.

She advanced towards the side of an humble bed, on which lay the body of the mother, still retaining that last and indescribable gleam of earthly beauty, which remains for a few minutes after the spirit has departed, and seems as if it were the reflection of the ethereal guest hovering in contemplation over the dwelling it has for ever quitted. An elderly woman was respectfully composing the limbs, while another was dressing the child as it lay on her lap.

Lady Sandyford was exceedingly moved by a spectacle as new as it was mournful, and obeying the shock and impulse of the moment, she hastily turned back, and ran across the street to the Rose and Crown.

“For Heaven’s sake!” she exclaimed to the landlady, who followed her into one of the parlours, “what is to be done with that unprotected infant?”

“Don’t afflict yourself, my lady,” replied Mrs Vintage; “the parish-officers will see to it. They have already sent for Mrs Peony, the wife of Mr Ferrers, gardener. Her own child died yesterday, and she will be right glad to get this one in its place. I would therefore, my Lady, recommend your Ladyship to take some refreshment, and compose your spirits. What will your Ladyship be pleased to take?”

F'lounce, her Ladyship’s gentlewoman and companion in the carriage, who had been during the whole time an amazed spectator of the Countess’s agitation, interfered, saying, “Perhaps my Lady will be better by being left for a little alone;” and the Countess intimating, by a motion of her hand,

an acquiescence in this suggestion, Mrs Vintage withdrew.

“Flounce,” said her Ladyship, the moment they were by themselves, “I have a great mind to take this baby with us.”

“O monstrous, your Ladyship!” exclaimed the tender-hearted Abigail. “Why the creature hasn’t a stitch of clothes; and how could we nurse it in the carriage on my best pelisse? No, my Lady; let the parish-officers first get it nursed, and then if it chance to be a beauty, your Ladyship may show your compassion; but, Lord, if it prove an ugly brawling-toad, what could be done with it?”

“There is some reason in what you say, Flounce,” replied the Countess; “particularly as to the risk your best pelisse might be exposed to. But, nevertheless, I will adopt the child; therefore, do you call in the landlady again, that I may speak to her on the subject.”

Mrs Vintage, on returning into the room, was accordingly informed that the parish-officers need give themselves no farther trouble about the orphan, for it was her Ladyship’s intention to take it under her protection.

“ But,” said the Countess, “ I do not wish for the present to be known in the business. I must therefore beg of you to make the necessary arrangements with the nurse of whom you spoke, and in the course of a few days, you will hear from me more particularly on the subject. In the meantime, I will leave with you what money may be necessary to defray the expences of the mother’s funeral. In order, however, that some key, if possible, may be got to her relations, I think it will be proper to take possession of any luggage she may have had with her.”

Mrs Vintage told her Ladyship, that she understood there was nothing but a box, which the officers had already opened, and found it contained only a few trinkets and clothes. “ I have taken charge of it, and if your Ladyship pleases, I will give it up to you.”

“ Yes,” said Flounce, “ I think if my Lady is to be at the expence of the brat’s education, she should have what effects belong to it. So pray do let us have the box with us.—I dare say, my Lady, some of the trinkets must be valuable ; for did your Ladyship not observe what delight-

ful large ear-rings the poor dead creature had? Surely they will never be so barbarous as to bury her with them. If they do, I should not be surprised were the sexton to dig her up in the night, and pull them out."

"Flounce," cried her mistress, with displeasure, "you allow yourself to talk too flippantly. Desire the footman to see the box carefully put up with the rest of our luggage."

Her Ladyship then gave Mrs Vintage some instructions respecting a slight repast; and while the preparations for which were going on, the requisite arrangements were made with Mrs Peony to take charge of the child, which the Countess directed to be named Monimia.

During the conversation, it transpired that the Mr Ferrers, in whose service the husband of the nurse was gardener, was the same gentleman whose attentions to the Countess had already produced such baneful consequences. He was lord of the manor in which the village was situated, and possessed a fine ancient seat in the immediate neighbourhood.

There was nothing in this information which

disturbed Lady Sandyford ; for she was not aware that it was owing to the ridiculous assiduity of Ferrers that her unhappy situation with her husband had been brought to such a painful issue. Nevertheless, the remainder of her journey to Elderbower, the seat of the Countess-Dowager, was performed in silence ; even Flounce said nothing, nor made any attempt to engage the attention of her Lady, but, ruminating on the events of the day, fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A DOWAGER.

ELDERBOWER had for generations been the appropriated retreat of the dowagers of Sandyford. It was a venerable white-washed mansion, presenting a front of three gables, topped with stately ornamented chimnies, toward a smooth, well-shaven green, inclosed on the right and left by high walls, clothed with laurels and other shrubs of constant leaf and verdure. This lawn, or parterre, as it was called, opened to the public road by a pair of iron gates of florid tracery, between two tall embossed and sculptured columns, on the tops of which stood a couple of grotesque statues, intended to represent Saxon warriors, the supporters of the Sandyford arms. These, in a boyish freak, while residing here under the maternal wing, the Earl one day painted in the colours of

the family livery, to place them on a footing, as he said, with their equally wise fellows in the hall ; and his mother, from an indescribable sentiment of affection, yearly renewed their liveries ; contrasting with sorrow the light and jocund gaiety of the time when the frolic was first played, with the headlong dissipation that had succeeded.

This widow's nest, as the Earl was in the practice of designating Elderbower, stood on the skirts of Elderton, a cheerful market town, near the rectory, and not far from the church ; so situated, as his Lordship said, in order that the dowagers might have the benefit of clergy in their felonies on the adjacent characters. But the insinuation did not apply to his mother, who was in many respects an amiable woman, though weakly overvaluing her rank.

When the bell at the gate announced the arrival of her daughter-in-law, she was sitting alone at a parlour window, which overlooked a flower-garden that sloped gently down towards a beautiful smooth grass plot round a basin, in the middle of which stood a naked leaden male image, intended for a heathen god, but whether Apollo or

Vulcan, was never thoroughly or satisfactorily determined. His reverence, the rector, who had once acquired some knowledge of such things at Oxford, was of opinion that the statue was an original cast of the Farnesian Hercules ; but the traditions among the domestics and of the environs, described it as the effigy of Sir Gondibert le Saint et Forte ; who, on account of his great valour, obtained the redoubtable surname of Hardknocks—a most valorous and courteous knight, that was taken by the Pagans and flayed alive at Jerusalem, in the time of the Crusades.

But however questionable the character might be which the image exhibited, or whatever controversies existed with respect to its origin, it certainly poured from a conch a copious stream of crystalline water, which fell in a gentle and ever-rippling shower on the surface of the basin, and spread into the quiet air around a sober murmur, that softly harmonized with the tranquillity of the scenery, and the golden composure of the setting sun, which the old lady was then contemplating, with her elbow resting on a large Prayer-book, in which her spectacles marked that she had

been recently reading the collects prescribed for the evening. Shock, her lap-dog, lay slumbering on the rug, with his head comfortably pillowed on the breast of Pur, a large demure and decorous tortoise-shell cat, that was also enjoying at full length the drowsy influences of the bright blue-tinged fire, which, like the splendour of the western skies, gave an assurance of continued clear and dry weather. Shock was disturbed in his siesta by the sound of the bell; and starting up, ran barking towards the door; while his lady, taking her spectacles out of the Prayer-book, placed it on a table behind her; on which, amidst several volumes of a devotional character, lay a copy of the newspaper containing the paragraph that completed the rupture between her son and his wife. It may therefore be easily imagined with what emotion she beheld the Countess, unannounced, enter the room; and almost in the same moment, felt her in tears on her bosom.

“Alas!” said the venerable matron, “what is this? and why have you come to me? But I pity you more than I can express; for I fear that the conduct of George afforded too just a palliation.”

“ Then you have already heard what has happened ?” cried the Countess, in some degree recovering herself. “ Whatever may have been my indiscretions, I am at least, my dear mother, free from the imputed guilt. Lord Sandyford and I have long lived a comfortless life. He has treated me as if I were unworthy of his affection, and perhaps I have acted as if I felt none for him. This public scandal has opened my eyes to my faults ; and I have come to you to learn how I may recover the esteem of my husband. My father urges me to a formal separation. He did indeed persuade me to remove with him from Sandyford-house. It was a rash step, but it is taken. Instruct me how it may be redeemed.”

The Dowager dropped a tear on the hand which Lady Sandyford had, in her earnestness, laid upon her knee, and said, “ I thank you, Augusta, for this confidence ; but I feel a mother’s sorrow for George. His ruin is, I fear, now complete. But endeavour to compose yourself, and we shall consider, at leisure, what is the best course to pursue. You have done wisely to come to me. The knowledge that you have taken refuge here,

will do much to remove that unfavourable construction towards you which the world, taught by the fatal newspaper tale, will doubtless put on the separation."

The maternal anxieties of the old Lady as to the manner in which the Earl had acted in the business, received some alleviation from the Countess's report of Sir Charles Runnington's mission, and she said, "Thank Heaven, his heart is not entirely corrupted, nor his principles destroyed; I hope he has still good feeling enough, were it once effectually excited, to work out a gracious change in his conduct. If he could once be convinced that you are solicitous to regain his affections, his ruin may be arrested; for whatever his behaviour may have since been, he once, Augusta, undoubtedly loved you truly."

The benign composure of the Dowager had an immediate and tranquillizing effect on the mind of the Countess; who, in the course of less than an hour after her arrival, was able to discuss with her the plan that she had formed in the hope of regaining the esteem of her Lord. The Dowager would have written the same night to request the

presence of the Earl, that their reconciliation might be immediate, but the Countess would not permit. "No," said she, "I do not wish that we should come again together, unless there can be a reciprocity in our tastes and sentiments. I feel my own insufficiency at present to contribute to his happiness."

The old Lady affectionately interrupted her, saying, "You have too humble an opinion of yourself."

"Ah!" exclaimed her Ladyship, "humility is to me a new feeling. I cannot disguise to myself that, with all my former vain pretensions to superiority, I have failed to preserve the love of a man that once doated upon me—perhaps I have even been instrumental to that woeful lapse which has so long embittered your declining years."

The tone of contrition in which this was expressed, surprised and grieved the venerable Dowager. She beheld the character of Lady Sandysford in a point of view of which she had formed no previous conception; and there was a modesty in this, which, while it moved her compassion, solicited encouragement. She saw that the Count-

ess felt more deeply the stigma to which she had been exposed, than could have been expected from a woman hitherto considered as equally under the dominion of pride and vanity.

By this time it was almost quite dark ; and such had been the earnestness of the conversation between the two ladies, that the one forgot the fatigue of her journey, and the other, to ask if she required any refreshment. Far different was the case with Flounce ; she was prattling away with delight over a dish of green tea, along with the methodical Mrs Polisher, who held the responsible dignity of house-keeper at Elderbower ; repaying the civility of her entertainer with a full, true, and particular account of the infidelities of the Earl. “ I declare, my dear ma’am,” said Flounce, “ he is the most shockingest man you ever heard of ; and more times than I shall tell, he has shewn his cloven foot to me. But, my Lord, says I, I would have your Lordship to know, that if my lady submits to your raking, I wont.—Really, Mrs Polisher, you make excellent tea ; but I suppose the water is very good in this here countrified place—and then his Lordship

would laugh and make game of me—Pray do give me a morsel of sugar—dear me, what charming cream—a little more—I protest it's beautiful—I never tasted such delicious cream—and this is such a pretty house—I guess, however, you must be dullish, keeping no company; and I should think my lady will not stay long. I fancy when the divorce is finished we shall have one of the Earl's other seats to live in."

"Divorce!" cried Mrs Polisher in amazement; for she had not yet heard, notwithstanding all Flounce's talk, any thing of the separation—"Divorce! what do you mean?"

"Why, haven't you heard that my Lady has been caught in a denoomang?"

Mrs Polisher, an old respectable matron, started back from the tea-table, exclaiming, "Not possible!"

"As to the possibility of the thing, that's neither here nor there," said Flounce, sipping her third cup; "but the story's all blown abroad, and our men read it in the newspapers; but being a delicate affair, you know I could not speak of it to my Lady herself; but it's in the newspapers;

so there can be no doubt of the fact. Indeed, my Lord Avonside came and took her away out of the house, and I was ordered to follow in the evening. Then there was such a piece of work—Really, Mrs Polisher, this is prodigious fine hysson—a small knob of sugar, if you please. But, you know, it does not do for us servants to make or meddle in these sort of matters—so I said nothing, because my place is a very good one. I wonder, however, what your Dowager thinks of the business.”

“Thinks !” cried Mrs Polisher, indignantly—
“It will break her heart ; and I am astonished that your Lady Sandyford should dare to shew her face in this house ; but these sort of creatures are as impudent as they are wicked.”

At this moment the Dowager rang the bell that summoned Mrs Polisher, and Flounce was left, for a short time, to her own meditations, or rather to her observations ; for the moment that the house-keeper’s back was turned, she immediately began to inspect every thing in the room, with the avidity of an intending purchaser. But before she had completed her survey, an old corpulent footman, who was lame with the gout, came

in to inquire for his young lord, as he called the Earl.

“ Don't talk of his Lordship to me,” cried Flounce, “ he's a naughty man, and 'tis all his fault.”

“ I wont believe a word on't,” said the man, who had heard something of the separation from the servants of Lord Avonside that came with the Countess ; adding, “ before he fell in with your damned lady——”

“ My damned—O, monstrous !—But the fellow's a bumpkin,” said Flounce, with a most ineffable toss of her head ; and she then added, “ Sirrah, if you know what it is to have good manners, you will bring in a light, and take none of these liberties with me.” Thus asserting and upholding her metropolitan superiority.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN ATTEMPT.

MORDAUNT, soon after Vellum's eventful interview with the Earl, called at Sandyford House, to represent in the strongest terms to his Lordship, the misery that he was evidently bringing upon himself; but he found him inexorable.

“Had Lady Sandyford not quitted the house,” said his Lordship, “thereby leaving me under an impression of her guilt, or what I regard almost equally bad, in total carelessness whether I considered her guilty or innocent, I might, perhaps, have been induced to re-consider her situation, but I cannot now. Her conduct confirms me in the justice of the opinion I have been unfortunately taught to form by her behaviour, ever since our ill-fated marriage. She is incapable of caring for

any one, and the only pain she will feel for what has happened, is the damage that has perhaps been done to her own reputation."

Owing to a long debate in the House of Commons, the preceding evening, the newspapers were late in being issued that morning, and the Earl, engaged with Vellum, had neglected to look at them. At this crisis of the conversation, however, his Lordship, in folding up a note, happened to throw his eye on the paragraph ingeniously inserted by Nettle, to turn the attention of the scandal-mongers. It stated the extreme regret of the editors and proprietors, that, by one of those inadvertencies inseparable from the haste with which a daily newspaper was necessarily compiled, a paragraph relative to the elopement of Mrs C. with the gallant Colonel D., had been so placed in connection with an account of the Countess of Sandyford's assembly, as to induce some of their readers to think it applied to that amiable and noble lady—"a mistake which they could not sufficiently lament, even although assured that it had only occasioned a great deal of merriment to the

Earl and Countess, who were every thing enviable and exemplary in married life."

His Lordship burst into a fit of laughter, exclaiming, "There are really no such fictions as those of your contemporary histories;" and he handed the paper to Mordaunt.

"What can be the meaning of this?" cried the honest country gentleman; "Is it satire?"

"O dear, no," replied the Earl; "the editors and proprietors suspect they have got into some scrape, and are taking this method to appease the offended enviable exemplars, meaning Lady Sandyford and myself; of whom, it would appear, they know about as much as they do of the political intrigues and transactions which they illuminate and chronicle with so much seeming sagacity."

"Monstrous!" cried Mordaunt; "I had no such conception of the licentiousness of the press."

"The only thing I am surprised at," said the Earl, "is, that the amend should have been made so expeditiously."

“ But who is this Mrs C. and Colonel D. ?” cried Mordaunt.

“ Who !” exclaimed the Earl ; “ I declare you cooing lambkins and capering doves of the azure fields are such innocents, that there is no speaking to you about any townish matter, without entering into details obnoxious to all inventive genius. Who, in this case, can Mrs C. be, but the celebrated Miss Fibby Fiction, the eldest daughter of my Lady Fancy, a personage of great repute and influence in the scandalous world ; as for the gallant Colonel, depend upon’t, he is no other than that fine bold swaggering blade, who, it is well known, has been long the declared adversary and rival of your country neighbour, Mr Simple Truth.”

“ And yet by this, which you think an invention, has your domestic happiness, my Lord, been sacrificed ?”

“ Softly, Mordaunt,” said the Earl, “ not so fast—my domestic happiness has not been so maltreated by the Flamens—these priests of Mars and Bellona, as I consider the newspapers—the heart and bowels were consumed on the altar of

the Eumenides long ago. But I cannot divine who has taken the trouble to interfere so expeditiously.”

Mordaunt then told his Lordship of the conversation which he had held with Andrew, describing the singular appearance and cunning simplicity of our hero.

The Earl was struck with the information, and exclaimed, “It is impossible that Wylie could have contrived any thing half so ingenious as this paragraph. But I will sound the bottom of it immediately.”

In the same moment his Lordship rung the bell. Wylie happened to be then at the door, coming to thank him for his kindness; and the servant who answered the bell announced him.

Andrew, from the moment that Vellum had communicated to him the generous interference of the Earl, had undergone an intellectual transmutation. An irresistible sentiment of gratitude arose in his heart, so strong and powerful, that it became as it were a principle of duty; and actuated by this hallowed and gracious feeling, with-

out reflecting on the impropriety of obtruding on his Lordship, at a time when a more worldly head would have concluded that the Earl was not likely to be in a humour to receive him, he went to Sandyford-house.

On entering the library, he was struck with the change in his Lordship's mien and air. Instead of the quiet smile of intellectual indolence which his Lordship usually wore, his countenance was lighted up, and there was a quickness in his eye, and a precision in his manner, that disconcerted the self-possession of our hero.

“How is this, Wylie!—here already!” said the Earl, surprised at his sudden appearance.

“I am come to thank your Lordship,” said Andrew, modestly.

The Earl was as much astonished at the diffidence with which this answer was expressed, as Andrew himself was at the exactitude of his Lordship's question. Mordaunt looked on, curiously examining them both.

“Say nothing about thanks, Wylie,” cried his Lordship. “I hope what Mr Vellum intends to

do for you will be repaid by your endeavours to give him satisfaction."

Andrew replied, still diffidently, "The will's hearty, my Lord, but the han's weak; I hope, howsomever, that your Lordship will let me do something to oblige yoursel, as weel as Mr Vel-lum."

Desirous to avoid the promptings of our hero's gratitude, the Earl interrupted him, saying, "Pray can you tell me how this got into the newspaper?" showing him the paragraph.

Andrew read it over studiously, and then said, "My Lord, this is glammerie;" and he then explained to the Earl, that he suspected it was a device to obviate the effect of the former paragraph.

Mordaunt was surprised at the sagacity of the seeming simpleton. His Lordship was no less so; and pleased with the coincidence with his own opinion, loudly expressed his approbation of the conjecture.

Our hero then related what had passed between him and Nettle; adding some reflections of his

own, calculated, as he intended, to lighten the importance which he supposed the Earl attached to the paragraph. "They are a' wheen wily gleds in this town," said he, silyly looking from under his bent brows. "Though it's a hang't lee, my Lord, I hope the tae half o't will be true, and that you and my Leddy——"

The Earl's countenance changed, and Andrew shrunk tremblingly from the stern rebuke of his eye; but Mordaunt, who saw the well-meant presumption of the observation, interfered and said, "You are quite right, Mr Wylie; and you could not better shew the sense of obligation, which you seem to feel towards his Lordship, than by wishing, as you do, a reconciliation with the Countess."

Lord Sandyford felt offended with Mordaunt for the freedom with which he addressed himself so openly on so delicate a subject, and to so young a man, and one, too, of our hero's condition.

Andrew, however, was encouraged by this interposition, and said, "Odsake, my Lord, ye mauna flee up at ony thing I say; for it would be an ill return for your Lordship's goodness, and

the discretion I have had at my Leddy's han, were no I to ettle my best——”

“Peace!” cried the Earl. Andrew looked round to Mordaunt, coweringly and jocularly, as if in dread of a castigation.

“You might at least hear what Mr Wylie has to say,” cried Mordaunt. “Kindness at all times merits civility.”

“Well, and what has Mr Wylie to say?” exclaimed the Earl, a little contemptuously, looking at our hero, who was, however, none daunted by his manner, but, on the contrary, urged by gratitude and the encouragement of Mordaunt, replied,

“I didna think your Lordship was sic a spunkie—ye'll no mend your broken nest, my Lord, by dabbing at it. So, out o' the regard I hae baith for you and my Leddy, I would spear what for ye put her awa'?”

The Earl, confounded by this category, almost laughed, and cried, “Why, thou paragon of animals, she went away herself.”

“Poor body,” replied Andrew, “ye maun hae used her very ill, my Lord?”

This was said in such a manner, that Mordaunt and the Earl looked at each other. He saw their astonishment, but took no notice of it, continuing, “ She was a fine Leddy—maybe a wee that dresy and fond o’ outgait—I’ll no say she was entirely without a fault, for we a’ hae our faults, my Lord,—and am in a great ane to speak wi’ this freedom to your Lordship ; but when I think what ye hae done for me—I was a friendless lad, and ye took me by the han’,—and could I sit still and see scathe befall my benefactor, I wouldna be a stirk o’ the right stock that’s bred on the lan’ o’ Scotland.”

There was something in this approaching to energy ; insomuch, that the Earl said, “ I am much obliged to you ; I thank you for the interest you take in my happiness. It does honour to your feelings ; but you will oblige me by saying no more on the subject.”

The manner in which his Lordship spoke was at once mild and firm. It admitted of no reply, and it offended no feeling. It neither made our hero sensible that he had transgressed the limits of decorum, nor that he ought to regret what he

had done ; but it effectually closed his lips, and he rose to take his leave. The Earl said to him, as he was on the point of retiring, “ I intended to have had the pleasure of seeing you with Mr Vellum before leaving town, but that I find will not now be convenient. Make my compliments to him, and say, that he will have the goodness to send the papers I want to Chastington-Hall, as I have determined to set off early to-morrow morning.”

Andrew, with humble respectfulness, and more emotion than his Lordship deemed him susceptible of, then withdrew.

“ I am glad to be rid of the fellow,” said his Lordship, as the door shut ; “ we should have been in heroics, with handkerchiefs at our tragical eyes presently ; and as I do not think the Scottish dialect is at all sufficiently sonorous for blank verse, don't you think, as a matter of taste, it was right to send him hence ? I am sorry, however, to have been so peremptory with him. The gods play with our hearts as shuttlecocks.—Here is a woman that I did not believe had life to feel even an insult, has gone off a flaming seraph, red-

dening with hostility—and an unlicked thing—becoming at once the noblest work of God—startling my baser humanity almost into tears.”—

During the time that his Lordship was thus speaking, he continued walking up and down the library. Sometimes he addressed himself to Mor-daunt ; but, for the most part, what he said was in soliloquy, and he was evidently deeply agitated ; at last he made a full stop, and said, “ I am really persuaded that this young ‘ Edwin is no vulgar boy.’ There is much virtue in that awkward simplicity of his ; for it begets negligence towards his talents, and that negligence enables him to acquire advantages which the creature, by a curious instinct, somehow uses in a way that is positively commanding, but which, in any other individual, would be downright and intolerable presumption and impudence.”

After this the conversation became light and general, all further allusion to the separation being studiously avoided. The Earl occasionally, however, spoke of his intended journey next morning to Chastington-Hall ; but, as if there was

something unhappy associated with the idea, he as often hastily embraced another topic. Before Mordaunt left him, he gave orders for the carriage to be ready at an early hour, to convey him from town.

“ I have long thought,” said he, in bidding Mordaunt farewell, “ that excellence was a very modest ingredient ; but I had no conception that wisdom lurked in so strange a form as in that creature Wylie. Therefore, I would advise you to trust him in your conjugal affair ; and if he do you service, which, from his acuteness, I am sure he may, you will not neglect to reward him. I wish that I had noticed his true character sooner.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FAMILY MANSION.

CHASTINGTON-HALL, the principal seat of the Sandyford family, was one of those fine old mansions, which are only to be seen in England, and which combine, with the antique grandeur of the baronial castle, the cheerful conveniences of the modern villa. It was erected in the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when the airy pinnacles, turrets, and tracery of the Gothic style, were first attempted to be assimilated to the symmetry of classic architecture.

The court-yard was entered by a stately portal, surmounted by a clock in a templar edifice, crowned with a dome, in the form of an earl's coronet; and the quadrangle of the court, in the centre of which a marble fountain threw up wa-

ter, from the shells of mermaids and tritons, was surrounded by an arcade. Numerous doors opened from this arcade to the lower range of apartments, and a spacious marble staircase, richly adorned with allegorical paintings, in the taste of Charles the Second's time, ascended from the court to splendid suites of galleries and chambers, all furnished in that costly and massive style which accorded with the formal pageantry of the magnificent courtiers of the Stuarts.

The situation was chosen with admirable taste and judgment. The mansion occupied the summit of a gentle rising ground, in the middle of an extensive park, naturally commanding a wide expansive prospect ; and the approach was by a superb avenue of beech trees, which seemed to droop their branches in salutation, as their master, towards the close of the day, was driven rapidly towards the portal.

The Earl had never before visited this princely place, and, of course, it had suffered by his absence ; although the servants had preserved every thing as well as it could be preserved, without repairs and renovations. It had, therefore, in some

degree, a faded and melancholy appearance, and when the carriage passed through the grand entrance, his Lordship thought, or rather felt, that the echoes in the arcade clamoured as if they had been suddenly awakened by the unusual sound of wheels, and rebuked him for his long neglect.

As he travelled with post horses, he was accompanied only by Servinal, his valet; indeed, he had determined to make no other addition to the usual establishment at Chastington-hall, the strict economy to which he was resolved to reduce himself, requiring every practical retrenchment.

During the greater part of the journey he had been silent and thoughtful; the only observation which he made, in the whole time of the last stage, escaped from him involuntarily, when he first beheld the numerous gilded domes and turrets of the mansion, glittering above the trees in the setting-sun. It was simple, brief, and emphatic,—“Have I thought of sacrificing this?”

The carriage drove in to the foot of the grand staircase, where the servants were assembled to

receive him. The men were, for the most part, grey-headed, and in their best liveries; but, although the colours were the same, the fashion of the clothes was not in so spruce a taste as those of their London compeers; and some of them, instead of smart white cotton stockings, wore their legs decently clothed in grey worsted. The household appearance of the women was no less peculiar. They were likewise dressed in their gayest attire, but rather in the orderly Sabine simplicity of the grange and farm, than in that buxom neatness that characterizes the full-formed female domestics, belonging to those seats of the nobility, which the families are still so patriotic as to visit regularly in summer, like the swallows and cuckoos.

But we should be guilty of unpardonable incivility towards Mrs Valence, the housekeeper, were we to allow a personage of her importance to be dismissed from our account of the Earl's reception, without some special and discriminative marks of our regard, particularly as his Lordship himself shewed, by the most courteous deference, the high esteem in which he held her character; and the equally great satisfaction with which he

was persuaded, at the first glance, she had, on all occasions, upheld the dignity and consideration of the family. She was a tall and ample personage, with a gentle oscillation of the head, which seemed rather to indicate a lofty sense of her own supremacy, than the infirmity of a slight paralytic affection. She stood on the third step of the stair, in the stately superiority of a full suit of dark-brown rustling double-tabinet, of which the unstinted flounces, and manifold ruffle cuffs, bore testimony to the taste and prodigality of the mantua-makers of other times; a vast well starched kerchief soufflé expanded her bosom into swan-like amplitude; and her hair was not only highly frizzled and powdered, but sustained a spacious structure of lace, muslins, catgut, and ribbons, the very wiry skeleton of which was sufficient to have furnished iron for the shackles of more than twenty perjured lovers in these degenerate days. Her hands and arms were invested with cambric gloves, as pure as the napery which it was her pride and delight, once more, before she died, to give out that morning to old Corkly, the butler, for the use of her noble master; and her

feet were in none of those slip-slop things that are only fit for the bed-chamber, but decorously installed in high-heeled red Morocco shoes, adorned with knots of white ribbon, so affluent, that they attracted the attention of his Lordship, as she conducted him through the picture-gallery to the principal drawing-room, and he could not refrain from complimenting her, even at the expence of a pun, in having such handsome beaux at her feet.

Mrs Valence stopped instantly at the words, and placing her hands formally over each other, on her bosom, made him as solemn a curtesy as the Princess Royal, at the commencement of a minuet, at a birth-day ball of her late most gracious Majesty Queen Charlotte. His Lordship, with no less corresponding gravity, returned a profound bow; and when she had recovered her wonted elevation, he followed her in silence, wondering into what venerable palace, amidst the pageant rites and olden homages of Fairy-land, he had been so curiously translated.

When he entered the drawing-room, he was pleased with the domestic taste in which it was

evidently set for use, notwithstanding the heavy golden grandeur of the furniture, but felt a little disappointed at seeing the silver chandeliers and sconces filled with candles; however, he good-humouredly resolved to allow the old servants to indulge themselves for that night, nor, on reflection, was he averse to obtain unsought, a specimen of the hereditary style in which his ancestors had been accustomed to live. While he was cursorily looking at the pictures which adorned the walls, but which, as the sun was set, he could see only imperfectly, his valet came into the room to inquire if he intended to dress for dinner.

“ I believe it is not worth while, Servinal.— But perhaps I ought; they will expect it,” said the Earl.

“ I think they do, my Lord,” replied Servinal.

“ Then,” cried the Earl, “ I will not disappoint them. Have you brought a court-dress with you.”

The valet smiled, and said he had not.

When his Lordship had dressed, and had returned back into the drawing-room, the bell over

the portal was rung, and the house-steward, a respectable old man, out of livery, announced that dinner was ready. The Earl followed him, and immediately on entering the picture-gallery, another old man proclaimed, "My Lord!" upon which the folding-doors at the end of the gallery were thrown open, by two younger footmen. The Earl proceeded, and on reaching the landing-place, he turned round to Mrs Valence, who was standing there, and said, with an air of great consideration, "Pray does Queen Elizabeth, with the noble Earl of Leicester, dine here to-day?"

"I believe not, my Lord," replied the stately house-keeper, with undisturbed consequentiality.

This was more than the Earl expected, and it forced him to laugh as he descended the great staircase; but, on entering the dining-room, or rather, as it was called among the household, the banquetting-room, he started on seeing a table laid out for at least a dozen guests, and covered with ponderous ancient massy plate.

"What is the meaning of this?" he exclaimed in a tone of displeasure; "Who is to dine here?"

Corkly, the butler, came up, and with three bows told him, that “it was an old custom of the family to dine always in state while at Chastington, in order to be prepared to receive any guests that might by accident come.”

The Earl would have said, I hope it is not expected that I am to keep open house; but he checked himself, and said gaily, “Fashions are somewhat changed since the golden age—that is, the age of the guineas, Corkly. However, to-night perform your duty as you were wont to do in my father’s time; or rather, if you please, in my grandfather’s.”

“I was not, my Lord, in the service of Earl James, your Lordship’s grandfather,” said Corkly, with an air that would have been called dignified in an old courtier speaking of George the Second; “but I have been forty-three years in the service of your Lordship’s noble family.”

“Indeed!” said the Earl, playfully; “then I must take lessons from you as to the etiquettes I am bound to observe at Chastington;” and, in saying these words, he seated himself at the

table, when one of the servants in attendance touched the spring of a large musical German clock, which immediately began to play one of Handel's overtures. But the machinery being somewhat out of tune, the Earl called out to them in mercy to stop that horrid musical Ogre; and turning round to the butler, said, "Save me this discord of Magog's accompaniment to my knife and fork, and I will not interfere with your rites and homages to-night."

"As your Lordship pleases," replied Corkly, with the reverence of a worshipper.

The eye and fancy of the Earl were thus interested and amused on the night of his first arrival at the great mansion of his ancestors. There was a simplicity in the domestics, which pleased him exceedingly, and their little awkwardnesses, with the formality and ceremonial which they made use of in their attendance, seemed to him at once venerable and picturesque. Corkly told him, that although the cellar had not been replenished for more than thirty years, it still contained several delicious vintages, and the Earl encouraged

the generous old man to expatiate on the glories of other years ; but though he seemed amused by the recital, an occasional shade came over his spirits, and he reflected, with a sigh, on the unhonoured years he had squandered away in London.

When he returned to the drawing-room, it was superbly illuminated ; but his heart recoiled from the solitary grandeur around, and as it was yet early in the evening, he ordered a fire to be lighted in a smaller apartment. He inquired if there were any books in the house, and heard, with surprise and delight, that it contained a library of many thousand volumes, to which, however, no addition had been made since the death of his father ; indeed, every inquiry served to remind him how much he had neglected this princely mansion, and how he had declined from the patriotic aristocracy of his fathers.

The following morning he walked into the park, and saw in every place the stateliest trees marked for the woodman, and many already felled.

“ I could not have imagined,” he said, in writing to Mordaunt, and mentioning the effect on his feelings, “ that the odd trick was such an edge tool.”

CHAPTER XXX.

NOBLE AUTHORSHIP.

THE first week, after the arrival of Lord Sandysford at Chastington-hall, passed more agreeably than might have been expected, considering the suddenness of the change which it occasioned in his manner of living. Two or three days were spent in examining the house, and the curiosities which remained as so many monuments of the taste and whim of his ancestors; and, above all, in an inspection of the family pictures. His Lordship had some pretensions to a physiognomical perception of character, and he amused himself with conjectures as to the mind and disposition of the direct line from which he was himself descended, tracing, or rather fancying that he

traced, the features which indicated the particular points of resemblance in their respective characters. This recreation was occasionally broken in upon by visits from some of the neighbouring gentlemen, with whom, although he received them with his wonted politeness, he shewed no inclination to cultivate an acquaintance; on the contrary, he took several opportunities to inform them, that he had come to Chastington expressly for retirement. He also visited his domain; and having suspended the general orders for the cutting down of the timber, he formed from his own observation another plan of thinning the woods, without materially affecting the beauty of the sylvan furniture of the park, especially in the immediate vicinity of the mansion. His eye had a natural perception of the picturesque; and the plan which he thus adopted, instead of impairing the magnificence of the rides and walks, had the effect of rendering them more pleasant and diversified in the views. The trees which were felled allowed more light, as it were, to be thrown upon the landscape, and prospects were opened, of the extent of which no previous conception had been formed.

It was his custom in the morning to ride round the park, and from the different eminences, to examine what distant objects might be seen from the parts covered with wood ; and then to order the woodmen to fell in such direction as would bring a village-spire, an ancient tower, or a modern mansion, into the termination of the vista which they laid open. But it was around the Hall that this species of picturesque economy was most judiciously managed. In the course of years, the timber had so increased in magnitude, that it inclosed the building with a depth and darkness of umbrageous boughs, altogether inconsistent with the florid lightness of the architecture—the effect of which produced a degree of gloom and solemnity in the building, strangely at variance with the fanciful style of the place. The Earl, by throwing down some of the trees which had grown to such a height as to intercept the views, and by letting in the light through the general masses of the surrounding woods, produced a change truly magical ; but he spared the celebrated chesnut which darkens the southern windows. The la-

mentation in the neighbourhood, for the fine old trees of Chastington, was changed into rejoicing, and all the visitors declared their delight and satisfaction at the improvements.

But although, in this manner, the Earl for some time created not only amusement, but business for himself, there was a sameness in the undertaking, and a patience requisite, which did not exactly suit the ardour and activity of his character, and he had recourse to other means of recreation. Having prescribed their work to the woodmen, he resolved to wait the issue of the full effect; and in order that he might prevent his restlessness from preying on himself, he endeavoured to find pastime in changing the appearance of the state apartments, not by the expensive medium of repairs or upholstery, but by new arrangements of the paintings and sculpture, the china, and the cabinets; but still there was something wanting. This also he found must become a subordinate concern—a matter of occasional recreation; for it afforded none of that earnest exercise to the mind which he longed to obtain. At last he had re-

course to the library ; and after a miscellaneous and cursory glance of the collection, he set himself into a regular course of historical reading.

To read was, with Lord Sandford, to think. Every page that his eye travelled furnished some new association to his mind, till the most remarkable and striking incidents of general history became connected with the passing topics of his own time ; for the French Revolution was then raging in all its fury, and drawing into its destructive whirlpool the venerable institutions of successive wisdom and experience.

The excitement which this systematic acquisition of knowledge produced, operated to an immediate effect. His Lordship became dissatisfied with the inadequate policy by which it was attempted to suppress the natural issue of a long continued accumulation of moral impulses ; and actuated by the new light which he had acquired on the subject of national mutations, began to write an historical view of the political effects of popular opinions.

When he had finished this pamphlet, he was conscious that, however just his reflections, and

indisputable his facts, it was not, in point of style and arrangement, such as would do him credit in the character of an author. He was aware, that the habit he had acquired of contemplating every thing through an ironical medium, in some degree affected his reasoning even in his most serious moments ; and that he used terms and phrases in a recondite sense, not altogether understood by the generality of the public ; so that, while his taste, with respect to the composition of others, was remarkably pure and just, he feared that his own work might be considered as conceited in its diction, and deficient in that air of sincerity essential to produce effect. He therefore longed for the assistance of a literary friend to correct its incongruities ; but there was no such being within the whole compass of all the adjacent parishes. At one time he thought of writing to his bookseller in London to procure, and send to him by the coach, some one of those retainers of the press, who execute the editorial duties to new editions of old works ; but he had early taken an anti-social prejudice against authors and artists in general, and could not endure the thought of having his

sequestration disturbed by the caprice of beings, whom he considered as sorely skinless to every thing that but seemed to interfere with their vanities. Publish, however, he must ; he felt himself urged to it by the very hand of Fate itself, and he could not resist the force of a necessity that was as irresistible to him, as if he had been the hero of a Greek or German tragedy, yearning to commit a crime.

In this dilemma he thought of our hero, of whose prudence he had begun to entertain a favourable opinion, and wrote to him to find some clever literary man, who would undertake to prepare a pamphlet for the press ; saying, that he would pay liberally for the assistance, but that he wished to remain unknown.

Andrew was at first not a little perplexed by the Earl's commission. He knew no author, nor was he in habits of intercourse with any one who did ; till recollecting Nettle, the reporter, he resolved to apply to him, with a previous determination, however, not to employ him in the business. Accordingly, the same afternoon in which he received his Lordship's letter, he went to the

newspaper-office, under the pretext of inquiring of Nettle, if he knew of any person who would take charge of a small parcel to Scotland for him.

No visit was ever better timed ; it was exactly at the wonted hour when Nettle usually went to his chop-house for dinner ; and Andrew, while speaking to him respecting the little packet he had to send to his grandmother, said, “ But, Mr Nettle, if ye’re gaun to seek your dinner, it’s just my time too, and maybe ye’ll no object to let me go with you.”

Nettle was not a little pleased with the proposition ; for, possessing a strong relish of drollery, Andrew was a character that could not fail, he thought, to furnish him with some amusement.

“ But,” rejoined our hero, when he found his company accepted, “ ye’ll no tak me to an extravagant house—no that I mind, mair than my neighbours, to birl my bawbee at a time, but in ilka-day meals, I am obligated to hae a regard for frugality.”

Nettle profited by the hint, and took Andrew to one of the best coffee-houses in the neighbourhood. Our hero perceived his drift ; but he also

thought to himself, "this is an occasion when I should birl my bawbee." However, upon entering the room he feigned great alarm, and catching hold of his companion earnestly by the arm, said, "Noo, Mr Nettle, I hope this house is no aboon half-a-crown. Od, Mr Nettle, I dinna like the looks o't—I doobt the folk that come here drink wine."

Nettle laughed, and seating himself at one of the tables, said, "Don't be frightened, Andrew; leave the matter to me—I'll manage every thing in the most economical manner."

"Mind it's on condition ye do sae that I sit down," replied our hero, seemingly very awkwardly affected by the appearance of the company around, as if a young man, who was in the practice of frequenting the tables and parties of the most fashionable houses, was likely to be disconcerted by the migratory visitants of a coffee-house. But he perceived that the reporter was uninformed as to this, and his object was to make this man of the town subservient to his purposes.

Dinner was ordered by Nettle, who, while it was setting down, said drily, "It is usual, you

know, to have a bottle of white wine during dinner ; but as we are on an economical regimen, I will only order a pint."

" I never ordered a pint o' wine since I was born," cried Andrew to Nettle, who immediately said, " O very well, I have no objection—Waiter, bring a bottle."

Our hero was here caught in his own snare, and exclaimed, with unaffected sincerity, " A whole bottle !"

Nettle was exceedingly diverted, and laughed at his own joke, especially when Andrew said, as the wine was placed on the table, " This is what I ca' a rank shame ;" but he was much less displeased than he pretended, and cunningly added, " I'm thinking that this trade of translating and writing paragraphs of yours, Mr Nettle, is no an ill line, an a body could get weel intil't, and had a name."

" I think," replied Nettle, delighted with his companion, " that you ought to try your hand, Andrew. I'm sure any thing from your pen must amuse the public."

“ Hooly, hooly,” cried Andrew ; “ a’ in a gude time, Mr Nettle—I hae my notions on the subject, but we maun creep before we gang—only there’s a curiosity in the craft that I dinna weel understand ; and that is, how to correc the press, and to put in the points, wi’ the lave o’ the wee prejinkities ; that, I hae a thought, is no an easy concern.”

“ As to the wee prejinkities, as you call them, and matters of that sort, the printers take a great part of the trouble off the author’s hands. But the plague is with the substantial matter, Andrew ; defects in that are not so easily remedied.”

“ But surely they can be remedied ?” exclaimed our sly simpleton.

Nettle was mightily pleased with this sally, and said, “ Andrew, when your book’s ready to print, let me know, and I’ll give you a lift in that way.”

“ It’s very discreet o’ you to offer sae ; but is’t true that there are folk in London wha mak a leeving by sic like wark ?”

“ True !” cried Nettle. “ How do you suppose the speeches of members of parliament are got up for publication—the voyages and travels of coun-

try gentlemen—novels of ladies of fashion—or any of the other et cetera by which illiterate opulence seeks to obtain literary renown ?”

“ Weel, this London is a wonderful place,” replied Andrew ; “ and are there really folk that do thae kind o’ jobs for siller ?”

“ To be sure there are ; and they make a snug thing of it.”

“ Noo, Mr Nettle, that’s what I canna comprehend. Hae they shops or offices ?—Whar do they bide ?—And how are they kent ?—They hae nae signs up ?—What’s their denomination ?”

“ It’s not easy to answer so many questions in a breath,” replied Nettle ; “ but I could name you fifty. There, for example, is our own countryman, Mole, he makes a thousand a-year by the business.”

“ Weel, to be sure, how hidden things are brought to light ! I ne’er,” exclaimed Andrew, “ could fathom by what hook or crook he was leeving, nor whar he leeves.—Whar is’t ?”

Nettle told him ; and Andrew, inwardly overjoyed, proposed to drink his health, as a credit to Scotland, in a bumper, although the cloth was not removed.

“ Stop, stop, man ; it's not yet time ; let us have the table cleared before we begin to toasts,” said Nettle, laughing at Andrew's supposed rustic simplicity.

Our hero then inquired what books Mole had edited and prepared for the press ; and in what degree of estimation they were held. Nettle told him the names of several ; but Andrew affected to doubt the truth of what he said, and alleged that they were perhaps not at all of that degree of merit which his companion asserted. This begot something like a difference of opinion between them, which ended in the reiteration of Nettle's assertion, and an affirmation that the publishers would verify the correctness of what he maintained. Andrew, however, did not urge the matter further. He had thus adroitly acquired the name and address of an able editor, and the names of the booksellers by whom he was employed. He had, in consequence, nothing further to say to Nettle that evening ; and, accordingly, pushing the wine-decanter past him, he rose to go away ; saying, “ I'm no for ony mair.”

“ Sit down,” cried Nettle, “ and finish the wine. The port here is excellent.”

“ Ye wouldna hae me surely, Mr Nettle, to sit till I’m taver’t? As sure’s death, I fin’ the wine rinnin in my head already—I’ll be fou, if I drink ony mair. No; ye maun just let me gang my ways. Ye’ll pay the reckoning; and if it dinna exceed five shillings, I’ll no grudge the cost o’ your conversation, which has been vera curious and agreeable—vera curious indeed, Mr Nettle. But gude night;” and in saying this, Andrew hurried from the house.

His first course was to the shop of Mole’s principal publisher, where he inquired for one of the books; and upon seeing it, he looked into several passages, as if he had been examining them critically, and said, “ I dinna think, now, that this is a very weel-written work.”

The bookseller was a little surprised at the remark; but as booksellers are accustomed to see wise and learned characters in very queer and odd shapes, he gave Andrew credit for some critical acumen, while he controverted his opinion, maintaining the merits of the style and composition as both of the first class. Andrew, however, stuck to his point, and finally declined to purchase the work; satisfied, however, that the publisher had

a high opinion of its literary merits. On leaving that shop, he went to another, and another, until he found the opinion of Nettle fully verified. He then proceeded to the chambers of Mole, whom he found at home, and whom he thus addressed, although they had no previous acquaintance:—"Mr Mole, I hae a bit turn o' wark that wouldna be the war o' your helping hand."

This abruptness startled the engineer of literature; but as he had seen the unlicked figure of Andrew at some of the fashionable houses, where he occasionally helped to make sensible speeches for the gentlemen, he divined, in some degree, the object of his visit, and civilly requested him to be seated, saying, "Pray, may I ask the nature of the business?"

"It's a kind o' a book that I hae a thought anent; but no being just as I could wish, in some respects, so particular in the grammaticals, I think, that before putting it out to the world, it wouldna be the waur o' being coll'd and kaim't by an experienced han' like yours."

"Have you the manuscript with you?" inquired

red Mole, endeavouring to look as serious as possible.

“ No, sir ; I wantit first to ken if you would undertake the work.”

“ That will, in some degree, depend on the nature of the subject, and the amount of the remuneration,” replied Mole. “ Do you mean simply that I should revise the manuscript, or re-write the work entirely ?”

“ I mean that ye’re no to hain your ability in the business ; but what I want to ken is the cost—supposing now the vera utmost, and that ye were to write it all over again—what would you expect ?”

“ You will not grudge to pay me at the rate of ten guineas a pica sheet octavo ?”

“ I’m no versed in your trade ; but let me see a book that you would mak your ell-wand, and I’ll maybe can then make a guess at the estimate.”

An octavo volume, printed on pica type, was produced, and the extent of a sheet explained to him.

“ Dear me,” he cried, “ but this, sir, is a dreadful price—ten guineas for doing the like o’ that—Na, na, sir, I couldna think o’ mair than five pound ;

and if ye gie satisfaction I'll try to make it guineas."

In the end, however, a bargain was made, by which it was agreed that the manuscript was to be submitted to the architect; and if entire re-edification was found requisite, the remuneration was to be at the rate of seven pounds ten shillings. Mole pleaded earnestly for guineas, but Andrew declared he could by no possibility afford a farthing more. The same evening he wrote to Lord Sandyford, that he had found a friend with some experience in the book-making line; and that if his Lordship would send up his manuscript, perhaps he could get him to undertake the job; but that he was a particular man, and very high in his price; which was commonly at the rate of ten guineas the sheet of pica demy octavo. Nevertheless, he assured his Lordship he would try and get it done on as moderate terms as possible.

The Earl knew as little of pica demy as Andrew himself, nor did he care. The manuscript was sent by a special messenger to our hero, who lost no time in taking it to Mole, by whom it was cursorily glanced over in his presence.

Mole was struck with the composition, and the general elegance of taste and imagination that scintillated in many passages ; and he said to Andrew, with a sharp and an inquisitive look, “ Is this your work ? ”

“ It’s what I spoke to you anent. I’m thinking it’s no sae bad as ye expectit.”

“ Bad ! ” exclaimed Mole ; “ it is full of the finest conceptions of a masterly genius. This is inspiration—I am utterly astonished.”

“ It’s a great pleasure to me, sir,” said Andrew, dryly, “ that ye’re so weel satisfied wi’t. I trust it will make you abate something in the price.”

“ We have made an agreement, and the terms must be fulfilled. I cannot say that the work will require to be entirely re-written. The material is precious, and wrought beautifully in many passages ; but it may, nevertheless, require to be recast.”

“ Then,” said Andrew, “ since ye like it so well, I’ll pay the seven pound ten per sheet, pica demy octavo, but no a single farthing mair, mind that ; for if you haud me to the straights o’ the bargain, I’ll just be as severe upon you. So a’ that

I hae to sae for the present is the old bye-word, 'they that do their turn in time, sit half idle—ye'll make what speed ye dow.' ”

The admiration of Mole was rather increased than diminished when, after the departure of our hero, he read the manuscript more leisurely. He deemed it utterly impossible that a being so uncouth could have written such a work ; but he had been told, when he first observed his odd figure in society, that he was a creature of infinite whim and fancy ; and the manuscript was still more calculated than this account to set all theories of physiognomy at defiance.

As for Andrew himself, he exulted in the bargain, and at his own address in suppressing, in the first instance, the rate at which he had agreed the revision should be made. But the effect intended by informing the Earl that the price was to be seven pounds ten shillings per sheet, instead of ten guineas, failed entirely in one respect ; for his Lordship was no further satisfied with the bargain, than as another proof of the simplicity and integrity of his agent ; at least it so appeared in the sequel ; for when the manuscript was recast and sent back to

Chastington-hall, he remitted a hundred pounds for Mole, which was nearly double the sum stipulated. Andrew, in taking the money to him, said, “Ye’ll find, sir, that I’m no waur than my word; there’s a hundred pound note; and as for the balance, ye’ll just keep it to buy a snuff-box or ony ither playock that may please you better.”

This liberality was, to the amazed reviser, still more extraordinary after the higgling he had suffered, than even the intellectual merits of the pamphlet; and in all companies afterwards, he spoke of Andrew as an incomprehensible prodigy of genius.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A SECRET EXPEDITION.

IN the meantime, the situation of Lady Sandford at Elderbower with the Dowager was far from yielding any consolation to her mortified spirit; for although the conduct of the old lady was truly exemplary, there was yet a sadness in her kindness that penetrated the heart of the Countess with anguish. The mother-lady was constantly picturing to her own imagination the regular and gradual ruin of her only and darling son—he who had been the pride of her maternal heart, the joy of her widowhood, and the glory of her expectations. No complaint escaped her, but numberless little accidental expressions betrayed the secret perturbation of her spirit; and more than once she

earnestly urged the young Countess to allow her to write to the Earl, and to invite him to Elder-bower.

The first time that the Dowager clearly expressed this wish, was one day after dinner. The weather out of doors was raw and gloomy—an unusual depression had all the morning weighed upon the spirits of both the ladies; and the Countess began to distrust the power with which she supposed herself capable of adopting a new frame and course of life, that would one day extort the admiration of her lord, and revive that affection which she had lost, not forfeited. The old lady eagerly urged her suit; affirming that it was impossible her son could have fallen so entirely from the original magnanimity of his nature, as to slight an endeavour to recover his esteem, which had all the energy of contrition, with the grandeur of virtue. “Believe me, Lady Sandyford,” exclaimed the partial mother, “that if he knew the depth of your sorrow at the misfortune that has come upon you both, there is nothing within the reach of his power and ability, that he would not exert to console you.”

The Countess burst into tears, and replied, "Alas ! my dear mother, in what is this to end ? I am conscious of my innocence. I know that I have never swerved from the purity of a wife ; but I have failed to retain the affections of my husband ; because, in the lightness of youth, and the intoxication of vanity, I was more gratified with the loquacious admiration of those whom I in reality despised, than with the quiet and placid tenor of his affection. My eyes are opened to my error—they have been opened by the consequences—vexation for my disregard may have irritated him into many of those follies that both your Ladyship and I deplore, and may have to mourn all the remainder of our lives. But what I now most immediately suffer, is the grief of knowing, that while I am here you have the monitor of your affliction constantly before you ; and, alas ! I cannot go away without giving some warranting to the evil report of the world."

"But why will you not allow me to tell George the state of your feelings, and leave it to himself to determine whether he will come to Elderbower or not ?"

The Dowager, in saying this, took the Countess gently by the hand, adding, “ Indeed, my dear Augusta, you are wrong in this—you are sacrificing yourself—you are distressing me ; and I fear you may have cause to rue the effect on George.”

Lady Sandyford dried her eyes, and said, “ Ah, I fear your Ladyship thinks of him as if he was still a boy ! You are little aware of the latent strength of his character ; nor was I, till reflecting on many things since I came to this house. Whatever his faults or his errors may be, meanness is not one of them. Nothing would be so easy as to bring him here, out of compassion ; but I cannot be an object of compassion to the man I love. The very virtue of his generosity takes the nature of a vice towards me, and I dare not appeal to it.”

She could add no more—the tears rushed into her eyes ; and she wept so bitterly that the old lady became alarmed, and said, “ This, Augusta, is what I did not look for from you. Let us drop the subject. But I will write to George ; and without saying you are with me, I will inquire into the circumstances, as they may have affected

him, by which your separation has been produced—an event of which I am totally unable at present to form any proper opinion.”

In the course of the same afternoon, the Dowager wrote to the Earl, believing he was still in London; and while engaged with her letter, the Countess went to her own room, where Flounce was notably employed in distributing her Lady's wardrobe from the trunks. The box which belonged to the mother of the orphan was standing on the floor; and Flounce, two or three times, before she excited any attention towards it, expressed her wonder about what it could contain. At last, however, she was successful;—the eyes of the Countess were directed towards the package; and her mind becoming disengaged from the passion of her own thoughts, her curiosity was awakened.

“I think, Flounce,” said her Ladyship, “we should examine that box, and take an inventory of what it contains for the poor infant. The contents cannot be valuable; but they may be such as to help the orphan at some future day to discover her relations.”

“I dare say they will,” replied Flounce; “and

I have my own reasons for thinking she will be found to have come of very great people in foreign parts. Does not your Ladyship recollect what delightful ear-rings were in her mother's ears?"

After some discussion respecting the means of satisfying this, as to whether a hammer was requisite, or the poker might serve, it was agreed that the assistance of the latter potentate should be first summoned, and if unsuccessful, the hammer might then be invited to take a part in the business. The poker, however, proved, in the strenuous hands of Flounce, abundantly effective—the lid of the box was wrenched open, and the contents exposed to view.

The first sight presented nothing remarkable. It consisted of different articles of female finery, neither of a very high, nor, as Flounce truly observed, of a very prime and fashionable quality; but, on exploring the mine, a small casket was found; it was seized by her Ladyship, and opened in haste, while Flounce stood the figure of wonder by her side. The contents, however, were not of any particular value; but among them was the miniature of a gentleman, which the Countess

recognized as that of Mr Ferrers. A letter was also found from Ferrers, written in such imperfect Italian as men of fashion are in the practice of addressing to the virgin train of the opera and ballet. It was not, however, either of a very amorous or amiable kind, for it seemed to be the dismissal from his protection of the unfortunate mother.

The first movement which the perusal produced in the spirit of the Countess, was not of the most philanthropic kind ; as for Flounce, she loudly and vehemently protested against all the male sect, as she called them, for a pack of infidel wretches.

After various disquisitions on this discovery, it was agreed, that, under existing circumstances, it would be as well for the present to say nothing in the house about it ; but that Flounce should return to the Rose and Crown, and explain to the landlady, in confidence, the relationship of the child, and urge her to take the necessary means to acquaint the father of Monimia's situation.

This was a charming mission, and exactly suit-

ed to the genius of Flounce, who accordingly went off next day by the London coach, which passed the gate of Elderbower; and that the servants might not be wondering and guessing as to the objects of her journey, she prudently deemed it expedient to inform them that she was going to town to bring some additions to her Lady's wardrobe.

The landlady of the Rose and Crown received her with great cordiality; but when, after many solemn injunctions, Flounce disclosed the object of her visit, Mrs Vintage coolly said, she would neither make nor meddle in the matter, for it was rumoured that Mr Ferrers had gambled away his whole estate, and that Castle Rooksborough was expected to be sold immediately. Flounce was not quite content with the conduct of the landlady, and returned by the coach the same evening, somewhat in a huffy humour, greatly to the surprise of all the household at Elderbower; who, being in the practice of calculating the distance, discovered that she could not possibly have been at London.

Flounce, however, was not to be confounded, as she told her Lady, by any suspectifying persons; and on the first expression of John Luncheon's surprise when he saw her alight, she informed him, that having forgotten something very particular, she was obliged to return; but there was a mystery and a flurry in her appearance that John did not much like, as he did not indeed much like herself, and he made his remarks on her accordingly to his fellow-servants in the hall; the effect of which had no tendency to exalt their opinion either of mistress or of maid.

The whole affair, however, might have soon passed off, and a plausible excuse been devised for not sending Flounce again to town; but the wonder was considerably augmented by another equally unaccountable excursion which she made the same evening.

In a laudatory account to her Lady of the infant—for she had summoned the nurse and Monimia to the Rose and Crown—she deplored the meanness of its attire, declaring that it was dressed in old trolloping things which had belonged to

Mrs Peony's brat ; adding, that she had seen in a shop-window in Elderton the most beautiful baby-linen, advising her Lady to purchase a supply for the poor dear little creature, just in charity, although it was not a legitimate. The Countess consented to this, and gave the requisite money.

Flounce was not one of those foolish virgins who slumber and sleep in their tasks ; on the contrary, she could never rest till her work was done, especially if it was a business seasoned with any species of adventure, or of mystery. Within less than two hours after her return, she contrived to slip out alone, and to purchase the articles she wanted. These she directed herself for Mrs Peony ; to whom she also wrote on the subject in the shop where she had bought them, and carried the parcel in her own hands to the London coach-office at the Nag's-head, and saw them booked with her own eyes, all in the most commendable spirit of faithful agency.

The purchase of fine baby-clothes in a small market-town, especially by a lady's maid, is an

event of some consequence; and the expedition of Flounce caused a good deal of conversation; insomuch, that the landlady at the Nag's-head, where John Luncheon and the coachman were in the practice of nightly taking their pipe and potation, heard of it next day; and mentioning the subject to her husband, he recollected the circumstance of Flounce bringing a parcel for the coach, and being very particular in seeing it booked. By this means the affair reached the ears of John Luncheon, who, having no remarkable esteem for Flounce, whom he described as a pert London hussey, surmised something not much to the credit of her virgin purity, and communicated his suspicions to Betty Blabbingwell, one of the maids, who rehearsed it, with some circumstantial and descriptive details additional, to Mrs Polisher, the house-keeper. Mrs Polisher, however, was not convinced of the truth of the report; but went herself to the shop where the purchase was made, where she not only ascertained the whole circumstances of the fact, but also that the articles purchased were of the very

finest description, altogether unlikely, indeed, for any chambermaid's accidental progeny. But Mrs Polisher was a prudent woman, and she said nothing. She, however, made her own reflections, and drew an inference that rivetted her antipathy against the Countess, an antipathy which had its origin in the great affection which she bore her young master from the first hour that she dandled him in her arms when a baby. But she did not disclose her suspicions to the Dowager, being determined to find out the whole affair before unnecessarily occasioning a rupture, which she anticipated would soon be complete and final.

In this manner the seeds of distrust were carried into that asylum, where Lady Sandyford had hoped to prepare herself for appearing with renewed advantage in the eyes of her Lord. Perhaps she erred in concealing the discovery which she had made of Ferrers' child, and the protection which she had bestowed on the orphan; nor is it easy to explain the feeling which influenced her; but a vague notion had occasionally floated across her mind, that the paragraph which involved her

in so much trouble referred to his marked attentions ; and it operated with the effect of a motive in restraining her from ever alluding to him in her conversations with the Dowager.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A MYSTERY.

ALTHOUGH the Earl had got his manuscript prepared for the press, as we have described, the publication was delayed by the occurrence of a disagreeable incident. One morning, on reading the county-newspaper, he happened to observe the advertisement of a sale by auction of the furniture of Castle Rooksborough ; and among other things enumerated, was a quantity of china, said to have been the same which was used by James I. at his accession to the English crown. In the changes of his furniture, his Lordship wanted some additional old china to complete an effect in one of the state-apartments ; and having nothing very particular at the time to engage his attention, he determined to attend the sale of Ferrers' effects.

Castle Rooksborough was, as we have already mentioned, situated near the Rose and Crown, about thirty miles from Chastington-hall. It was therefore, on account of the distance, in some degree necessary that his Lordship should remain there all night ; and being desirous that his mother should not hear of his being so near her neighbourhood—for Elderbower was but one stage off—he resolved to go alone to the sale, that he might not be known by his servants.

It was late in the evening when he reached the Rose and Crown, and nothing particular occurred that night. Next morning, before the sale, he walked in the park of Castle Rooksborough ; and although the air was clear and bracing, and the Spring sat in every bower, crowned with her gayest garlands, there was something in the scene and circumstances which did not altogether tend to exhilarate his spirits. The estate was dilapidated by a spendthrift possessor, and ordered to be sold, with all the moveables, by his creditors. It had been for ages in the possession of the prodigal's ancestors ; and a general murmur prevailed through-

out the county against the unhappy man's indiscretions. The reflections which these things produced sank into the heart of Lord Sandycroft, and placed his own conduct in a mortifying light before him.

As he was straying over the grounds, he fell in with a young country-girl carrying a child. The brilliant dark Italian eyes of the infant attracted his attention; and the style in which it was dressed, so much above the appearance of the nurse, induced him to stop and speak to her. The beauty of the infant won upon his affections, and his curiosity was excited to learn how a child, apparently better born, came to be entrusted to so young, and seemingly so improper, a nurse. The girl, however, could give him no satisfaction. All that she knew respecting it was, that she had been hired by the landlady of the Rose and Crown to take care of it while it remained with Mrs Peony, who was employed by a grand lady to suckle it.

There appeared to the Earl some mystery in this; and when he had purchased the lot of china, which he ordered to be sent to Chastington-hall, he returned to the inn to hold some conversation

with the landlady on the subject of Monimia, for the child was that orphan.

Mrs Vintage of the Rose and Crown did not prove quite so communicative as he expected. She only civilly answered his questions, and said no more than what a direct response required.

“Do you know the parents of the child?” said his Lordship. “They must be persons of some condition, I should think, by the dress of the infant.”

“As to that, I cannot say; I have never seen either of them. The mother is dead; and as for the father, I can give you no account of him.”

“Then who in this neighbourhood pays the nurse?”

“I do,” replied Mrs Vintage.

“And how are you repaid?” said the inquisitive peer.

“I do not think I am bound to answer that question to a stranger,” replied the prudent landlady of the Rose and Crown.

His Lordship finding that she was resolved not to satisfy his curiosity in a direct manner, and her guarded answers having only served to whet his

inquisitiveness, he took another, and a more ingenious course with her. He affected to let the topic drop, and began to question her about the neighbourhood, and the travellers of rank who had recently stopped at the house—a subject on which she delighted to expatiate. Among others, she mentioned the transit of the unfortunate Lady Sandyford in her father's carriage; in speaking of whom there was a degree of embarrassment in her manner that strongly excited his attention.

The sharpness of the Earl's interrogatories increased her confusion; and she contrived, in order to avoid the keenness of his questioning, to leave the room, just at the moment when she had led him to suspect that there was some mystery connected with the Countess and the child.

The agitation into which he was thrown by this conversation, is not to be described. He almost instantly ordered a post-chaise, and returned to Chastington-hall, burning with thoughts of suspicion. At the first stage where he changed, he met Servinal, his valet, returning from London, where he had been sent on some business; he had come back with the coach on which Flounce had

travelled from Elderbower on her mission to Castle Rooksborough, and he heard of that damsel's secret expedition—she herself having told the coachman that she was Lady Sandyford's maid.

On seeing his master alight, and not being aware of the state of his feelings, Servinal informed his Lordship of that circumstance, wondering what business could have taken Flounce to the Rose and Crown. This was confirmation to all his Lordship's jealousy; and when he resumed his chair at night in the library of Chastington, his very soul was boiling with indignation against the insolence, as he now deemed it, of the message which Sir Charles Runnington had brought from the Marquis. But suddenly, in the fury of his passion, the remembrance of the part he had himself performed as a husband, came like a blast from the frozen ocean, and chilled his blood.

The temper of his feelings changed. The Countess, in the youth and bloom of her bridal charms, rose in the freshness of his early fondness, and moved him to sorrow and remorse. All other feelings were absorbed in contrition, and he

wept with the profuse tears of lamenting childhood.

In an instant, however, the paroxysm took another turn, and he reflected on the sincerity with which he had loved, and how coldly his ardour had been met ; how negligently his tastes and his predilections were regarded ; and giving way again to the impulse of these reflections, he accused the Countess as the most insensible of women,—the most artful, perfidious and base,—and, starting from his seat, rushed across the room, with desperation in his looks, and his hands fiercely clenched and upraised. In that moment the door opened, and his mother entered.

His surprise was inexpressible at her appearance, and still more, when, in pressing him to her bosom, and weeping on his neck, she said, “ Alas ! my unhappy boy, I did not expect to find you in this condition.”

The venerable matron, unable to repress her maternal feelings, when, by accident, she heard that he had retired from London to Chastington-hall, determined to visit him. Nor did the Countess oppose this natural solicitude.

When the first reciprocity of affection was over, the Dowager took a seat beside her son, and calmly remonstrated against the seclusion in which he had too suddenly shut himself up ; expressing her hope that the breach between him and his wife was not irreparable.

“ What !” he exclaimed, “ can you think me able to submit to the degradation of respecting a flagrant adulteress ? I have such proof. I have seen with my own eyes the living evidence of her guilt—O, let us speak of her no more, let her perish in the unproclaimed infamy to which she has sunk !”

The Dowager was thunderstruck, and remained looking at him, and unable to speak. But when his agitation had in some degree subsided, she recovered her self-possession, and inquired to what circumstances and proofs of guilt he had alluded. This led to an account of his excursion, and to the supposed discovery he had made of Monimia.

The old lady could not credit the story, and expressed her suspicion of some mistake on his

part, which had the effect of reviving all his indignant feelings.

“ Mother !” he exclaimed, “ you do not know the woman—her whole soul is engaged with nothing but herself—She could never see attention shewn to any other, without considering it as something unjustly taken from herself—She never felt that her interests and affections were wedded to mine, but regarded them as distinct and pre-eminent—She worshipped no other god but herself—She made me feel, from the fatal day of our marriage, that there was nothing mutual between us, that I was only subsidiary to her—The sense of that discovery drove me to despair—a despair that wore the mask of pleasure to the world, while worse than ten thousand scorpions was stinging me at the heart. In all that wild and wicked interval, she calmly set herself out for adulation ; never once did she look as if she felt any apprehension for the issue of a career that she could not but see must terminate in ruin—Even in those hours of remorse and ennui, when one gentle wish from her might have recalled me

to myself, did ever any such pass the cold marble of her lips?"

"This will not do, George," interposed the Dowager, with an accent of entreaty and moderation. "This vehemence of feeling is not what the object deserves, if she is so unworthy as you have represented her. But calm yourself; it is possible there may be some misunderstanding or misconception in all that you have told me."

"There is neither conjecture nor misunderstanding in what I have felt," replied the Earl; "but let us drop the subject.—I am glad to see you at Chastington, and I will shew you, to-morrow, the improvements I am making."

In this abrupt way his Lordship changed the conversation, and, in the course of a few minutes, was almost as cheerful with his mother as if he had never given her any reason to deplore his folly, nor had any to do so himself. But determined in his own mind to sift the matter thoroughly, since it was possible there might be some mistake, he wrote the same evening to Mr Vellum, requesting Wylie to be sent to assist him in the arrange-

ment of some domestic concerns. He said nothing of the business for which he wished this assistance ; but allowed the Solicitor to imagine that it might be with reference to the papers and suggestions, which the Earl, a few posts before, had received relative to the state of his income and debts.

The situation of the Dowager was most embarrassing. When she parted from the Countess, she had promised to return on the third day, or to write. But with the disagreeable news she had received, neither could properly be done. At the same time, however, such had been the favourable light in which her daughter-in-law appeared, from the moment of her arrival at Elderbower, that she would not allow herself to entertain any thought derogatory from her honour. She expected that the Earl would have set out the next day to Castle Rooksborough again, to examine the mystery there more leisurely ; but he evinced no disposition to do so. He merely said, after breakfast, that he had written to London for a young gentleman, whom he thought might be useful in

helping him to investigate the mystery of the child of the Rose and Crown ; “ For,” said he, gaily, “ until we discover its parentage, we can assign it no better sire and dam.”

But if the arrival of his mother disturbed the monotony of the Earl’s retirement, it was an event of delightful importance to the domestics at Chastington-hall. Mrs Valence exulted in the opportunity which it afforded to her of displaying, before so thorough a judge as her Ladyship, with what care, and in what perfect beauty she had preserved every article which had been committed to her charge ; nor was there a servant in the house who had not some voucher to produce of fidelity and vigilance. All received their due meed of dignified commendation, and all of them rejoiced in the greatness of that reward.

Her arrival was also productive of other cheerful consequences to the household. The shyness with which the Earl received the visits of the neighbouring gentlemen, had, in a great measure, suspended the intercourse that might otherwise have arisen ; but the elderly matrons in their fa-

milies, who had been acquainted with the Dowager in the time of her Lord, on hearing that she had arrived at Chastington, came flocking in crowds to see her ; so that, for a day or two, there was something like a stir about the house.

The presence of a Lady Sandyford at the Hall, was, indeed, like the spring ; it drew out from their winter seats, as gay as tulips from their bulbs, all the ladies in the vicinity ; and many a sable son of the church was seen slowly moving towards the portal, as sleek and as plump as the snails, that the genial influence of the season had induced to come abroad. Among other visitors, the Dowager was pleased to discover, in a little smart old man, in black satin inexpressibles, with sky-blue silk stockings, golden buckles, a white waist-coat, and a green coat, with his smirking face dapperly set in a trim white tie-wig, Dr Trefoil, whom she had herself been chiefly instrumental in bringing into notice when a young man ; not, however, so much on account of his professional abilities, as for a certain dainty and pleasing method of treating those little irksomenesses of the sex, that are

often as afflicting to themselves and their friends as more serious diseases. The Doctor, in his youth, had been a beau ; indeed, his appearance bore incontestible proofs of that historical fact ; but, notwithstanding all the pretty little compliments which he was daily in the practice of paying the ladies, he still remained a bachelor—and was now determined to die, as he said, a martyr to his humanity. For it seems the Doctor had, like many other sage and learned personages, become a convert to the Malthusian heresy, then recently promulgated, and was alarmed at the hazard we run of being elbowed out of the world, in spite of the faculty, war, pestilence, famine, and sudden death.

Scarcely had her old acquaintance offered his congratulations at seeing her Ladyship look so well, when, recollecting his delicacy and address, it immediately occurred to her that he might be a fit person to employ as an agent, in sifting the mystery connected with the birth of the child.—But it is necessary that we should revert to the state and situation of the young Countess, who,

in the meantime, was left as dull as any lady of fashion could well be, that had actually happened to suffer the enamel of her reputation to be damaged.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A DISCOVERY.

WHEN the Countess heard that the Earl had, suddenly after her departure from London, also quitted the town and retired to Chastington-hall, her mind was seized with an unaccountable anxiety and apprehension. She ascribed the cause at first, naturally enough, to his wish to avoid their mutual friends until the separation had blown over; but when her father wrote that their house had been taken possession of by Mr Vellum, and that the establishment was broken up, she felt that a change indeed had taken place, as much beyond her control as it was above her comprehension. That Lord Sandyford should disentangle himself at once, and as it were by force, from all his town connexions, seemed to her a prodigy of which she

could form no just estimate. She sometimes thought it was but the temporary resolution of a fit of spleen; but she remembered, with a feeling to which she could assign no name, that he had often manifested a decision and firmness that belied that carelessness which she had considered as the strongest peculiarity of his character. The event interested her curiosity as well as affected her sensibility; and she was glad when the Dowager proposed to visit him at Chastington.

Nothing, however, could exceed her chagrin, when, instead of the return of the old lady on the third day, according to her promise, she received a note, simply stating that it was the Dowager's intention to remain some time at the Hall, and without containing a single word on any other subject. This was even still more mysterious than the sudden alteration in the conduct of the Earl, while it seemed to spring from the same cause. It grieved and it vexed her, and affected her best thoughts and calmest moments with inquietude and despondency. She felt sometimes as if she had been abandoned to solitude and suffering; and though conscious that she had committed no crime to entail

so bitter a punishment, she confessed to herself that she had been perhaps too late in considering that the preservation of a husband's love is often the most difficult, as it is always the most delicate duty of a wife.

When the Dowager had been absent four days, a servant came from the Hall to take some addition to her wardrobe; and from him his unfortunate mistress heard that it was doubtful when she would return. She also learned that the Earl had been informed by his mother that she was at Elderbower. All this was incomprehensible, and turned her pillow into thorns. Flounce, who saw her anxiety, and guessed something of her thoughts, exerted her utmost powers of talk and tattle to amuse her without effect; at last she proposed they should make an excursion to see the orphan. "It is such a beauty," said Flounce—"has the most charming eyes—it will do your poor heart good to see the pretty dear. Besides, it is but twelve miles off—we can go there in the morning, and whisk back to dinner with all the ease in the world."

The Countess was not in a disposition to controvert the exhortation of Flounce; and accordingly a post-chaise was ordered, and the Lady, attended only by her waiting-gentlewoman, set off to visit the child of the Rose and Crown.

The sale at the Castle had lasted several days, but it was all over before they arrived, and the mansion shut up.

After amusing herself for a few minutes with the infant Monimia, whose beauty certainly did not appear to have been exaggerated by Flounce, the Countess strayed into the Castle-park alone, leaving Flounce to gossip with Mrs Peony. The day was remarkably fine for the season, and the spring was in full verdure; but there was a solemnity in the woods, all marked for the axe of the feller, and a silence in the venerable mansion, every window being closed—that touched the heart of the solitary with inexpressible sadness. She walked round the walls, and looked for some time at a number of swallows, which, as if informed that the house would be long untenanted, had that morning begun to build their nests in several of the window corners.

As she was indulging the train of reflections which this little incident awakened, she saw a gentleman pass hurriedly across the lawn, and enter a small gate in the garden-wall, which she had not before noticed. His figure was familiar to her; but the rapidity of his pace, and the intervention of the boughs of the shrubbery, prevented her from seeing him distinctly.

There was something in his air and haste which startled her; and a sentiment more deserving the name of interest than curiosity, led her to follow him to the gate which he had left open. On looking in, she was surprised at the beauty of the garden, but her eye speedily searched around for the stranger;—he was, however, nowhere to be seen.

As she was standing with the door in her hand, she observed a puff of smoke rise from behind the corner of a conservatory; and immediately after, the stranger rush from the same place, with a pistol in his hand. His appearance left her in no doubt that he meditated a desperate deed against himself; and prompted by the irresistible impulse of the moment, she darted forward and snatched the weapon from his hand. In the same instant

she recognized in him Mr Ferrers, the unfortunate owner of the Castle. He also knew her, and exclaimed, “ Gracious Heaven !—Lady Sandyford here !”

A brief conversation followed. He declared himself utterly ruined—all his friends had deserted him, and he had none left but death—no home but the grave. Her Ladyship was excessively shocked ; she trembled from head to foot ; and still holding the pistol, implored him to desist from his dreadful intent.

“ Alas, madam !” cried the frantic man, “ you may as well tell him who is expiring of a fever, not to die. Despair is my disease ; and I am as much its victim as the lazar that perishes of mady in an hospital. I have stooped to beggary—I have scarcely refrained from crime ; but all has been of no avail. A curse is upon me, and misery in my blood. It is inhuman, Lady, to break thus upon the secret horrors of a dying wretch. Leave me—O leave me, Lady Sandyford, to my fate !”—And he made an effort to seize the pistol again ; but she had the presence of mind, though agitated beyond the power of speaking, to plunge

it into a pond, where the gardeners filled their watering-pans.

Ferrers, on seeing this action, started back, and said in a voice that was seemingly calm, but awfully emphatic, “ I have heard or read, that, sometimes in those black moments when all chance of help deserts the hope and reason of man, Providence is pleased to manifest its power and watchfulness—Has it sent you to save me from perdition ?”—And in saying these words, he knelt and kissed her hand with the reverence and awe of adoration.

In this crisis, the Dowager Lady Sandyford, leaning on the arm of Dr Trefoil, entered the garden ; but, on seeing this scene, immediately withdrew. The old Lady recognized her daughter-in-law, and, without uttering a word, hurried back to her carriage, which stood at the entrance to the park. The Doctor, who was unacquainted with the Countess, made several attempts, as they hastened back, to break the consternation of the Dowager, by joking on their mal-intrusion ; but she fearfully silenced him by wildly shaking her head.

On reaching the carriage, he handed her in, and then took a seat beside her.

“Where shall we drive?” said the servant, as he shut the door.

“Home, home, home, to Chastington.”

The Countess, unconscious of the evil construction that was perhaps naturally enough put upon the situation in which she had been discovered, retreated from the impassioned gratitude of Ferrers, and hastened back to the Rose and Crown, where she learned, with extreme vexation, that the Dowager Lady Sandyford had been there with a gentleman anxiously inquiring for the orphan.

“I do believe,” said the landlady, as she communicated this news, “they have come from Chastington on purpose, and I dare say they will be back presently; for the nurse, with your maid, is walking in Rooksborough-park with the child, where they have gone to seek her. I happened to be out of the way when her Ladyship arrived, and she asked, I am told, very earnestly to see me.”

While they were speaking, the nurse, with

Flounce and Monimia, were seen coming quickly towards the inn. Flounce had recognized the carriage and livery from a distance, and was hastening to ascertain the cause of so unexpected a phenomenon, when she saw it drive suddenly away.

The spirits of the Countess were exhausted by the painful trial to which her feelings had been subjected ; a presentiment of misfortune oppressed her heart ; and during the greatest part of the journey back to Elderbower, she seldom exchanged words with Flounce. They were indeed half way before any thing occurred to move her from the melancholy abstraction into which she had fallen. It happened, however, that, on reaching the cross-roads, where the branch that led past Chastington diverges, they met the London coach, on the outside of which, covered with dust, sat our hero, on his way to the Hall.

“ As I live,” exclaimed Flounce, “ if there be not that Dutch nut-cracker, the Scotch creature, flying away on the top of the coach. Where can he be going to wink and twinkle, and snap his fingers, till he makes the sides ache again ?”

“ I wish,” said the Countess, “ I had stopped

him ;” and she added, with a sigh, “ Can he be on his way to Chastington ?” She then relapsed into her melancholy reflections, thinking it probable the Earl was entertaining company, and had invited Andrew to amuse them. “ In what,” thought she to herself, “ is this singular solitariness of mine to end ? Can it be possible that some one has poisoned the ear of Sandyford, and that he has converted his mother to believe the suspicion. That vile paragraph he seemed to think true. Has the author of the malignant invention had access to him ? Can Sandyford condemn me without a hearing, without proof, without investigation ?— No matter, I will droop my head in secret ; and whatever may have been my faults hitherto—for all that heartlessness with which I have been so often taunted, perhaps justly—I may yet die of a broken heart. I feel that I can.”

While these painful reflections were vibrating in her mind, the carriage arrived at Elderbower. On alighting, she walked directly to the Dowager’s parlour, where dinner was immediately served up. She felt herself, however, so much indisposed, that, instead of sitting down to table,

she retired to her own room, and surrendered herself to the most desponding reflections. Bred up in the preserves of dignified opulence, she had never before seen the anguish of mental distress in any undisguised form, nor could she till then comprehend the horrors which ruin and poverty presented to a mind of such a feverish temperament as that of Ferrers. Her life, till the occurrences arose of which we have been treating, had been one continued series of the most ordinary transactions that befall persons of her rank and condition. She had passed from the fondling embraces of the nursery, to the measured and circumspect regulations of her governess, and from these to the incense of public admiration, under the auspices of her accomplished husband. She had never till now come into actual contact with the world, nor been once obliged to draw on those innate resources which she possessed within herself, against its malice, or the vicissitudes of fortune. She had heard of suffering and of sorrow; had wept over afflictions described in novels, and sighed over sorrows deplored in poetry; but the real nature of either she had never known; and what she felt for

the distress of the wretched Ferrers, was as new in sensation as it was disagreeable.

While she was thus indulging her feelings, a messenger arrived from Burisland Abbey, her father's seat in that neighbourhood, with a letter from the Marquis, in which his Lordship expressed his regret, that she should have exposed herself to the mortification of being abandoned by the Dowager Lady Sandyford ; hoped she was in good health ; informed her that his own seat, Bretonsbeild Castle, was in readiness to receive her ; advised her to remove thither immediately, and to write him what she wished done ; for that he was obliged to return to London on public business of the utmost consequence, the second reading of the County Prison Bill being fixed for the day following.

The mind and feelings of the Countess were so much occupied with her own agitated reflections, that the style and contents of this paternal epistle did not at first make any particular impression, and she read it as Hamlet did the words. She saw the forms of the alphabet, the outlines of the page ; she knew the hand-writing, and the sense

floated before her ; but when she laid the paper on the table, the whole was forgotten, and she remained for some time ruminating and abstracted, till a flood of tears came to her relief.

When the emotion of weeping had subsided, her eye accidentally fell on her father's letter, and she immediately took it up, and read it again. The coldness of the language smote her heart, and she felt as if the barb of an icy arrow had penetrated her bosom, on reading the expression, " Abandoned by the Dowager."

She rung the bell with an eager hand, and ordered the carriage to be instantly ready for the Abbey. She drove thither in a state little short of distraction ; but, on arriving at the gate, was informed that the Marquis had three hours before set off for London. She had still his letter in her hand, and her first thought was to proceed immediately to Chastington ; but, changing her determination, she unfortunately went on through the park to the Abbey, where she alighted, and requested that one of the servants might immediately prepare to go to the Hall for her, on business of the utmost consequence. Having given

these orders, she wrote a note to the Dowager, inclosing the Marquis's letter, and simply requesting an explanation of its contents.

The groom was in readiness with his horse at the door, almost as soon as this brief note was sealed, and he instantly set off. He reached the Hall while the Dowager was dressing for dinner, after her return from the excursion with the Doctor, and the note was delivered to her in her own room. She read it hastily, and also that of the Marquis, and immediately folding them up in the agitation of the moment, and with a trembling hand, she wrote two lines, simply saying, that the occasion of Lady Sandyford's visit to Castle Rookborough, and her clandestine interview with Mr Ferrers in the garden there, would sufficiently explain the reason of her abandonment.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.



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